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# **LEAVES FROM. INDIAN CULTURE**

**EDITED AND ANNOTATED  
BY  
T. N. JAGADISAN, M.A.**

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*Companion Volume*  
**INDIAN LIFE AND LEGEND**  
Edited and Annotated  
BY T. N. JAGADISAN, M.A.  
BLACKIE AND SON (INDIA) LIMITED

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T. N. J.

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## INTRODUCTION

This book of literary selections on Indian life and culture is intended to serve as reading for the under-graduates of our Universities. It is hoped that these essays by eminent writers—some of them foreigners who love India and show a profound insight into her culture and a deep sympathy with her traditional life, others the children of the soil, inheritors of her great past and architects of her greater future—will stimulate in the young a reasoned devotion to the Motherland.

The line of Lecretius is famous—*Quasi cursores*—: like runners in a relay race, men hand on the torch of life. We cannot disown the past, nor omit to “praise famous men, and our fathers that begat us.” An earlier generation, disappointed with the decadence of our national traditions and fascinated by the fresh contact with Western life and ideas, turned away in disgust from the panegyrics of the past. But to-day there has come into the general consciousness of cultured India the feeling that the roots of our national existence should be firmly planted in the past, though the full flowering and fruitage thereof should be in the living present and the unborn future.

It is hoped also that the varied nature of the selections and the impartial treatment of the themes by scholarly minds will suggest to the reader the unity of an underlying national spirit in the midst of the infinite

diversity of the Indian scene,—the inspiring idea that we have inherited an ancient culture which, transcending all differences, and conquering her conquerors, spreads with renewed life, from end to end of this great country. From this notion of synthetic nationalism, the step to the feeling of the oneness of mankind is easy. “ He who loves not his home and country which he has seen, how shall he love humanity in general which he hath not seen? ” (Dean Inge.)

“ A nation,” wrote Renan “ is a spiritual family, the product of past memories, past sacrifices, past glories, past sorrows and common regrets.....and of present desires to continue to live as one. What makes a nation is not a common tongue, or membership of an ethnographical group—though these have their value and significance—but the achievement of great things in the past, and the desire to achieve them in the future. The nation is a spiritual principle, with its roots deep in history.” May we hope that the selections in this book will convey in some measure the oneness as well as the greatness of our nation?

T. N. J.

## 1

## THE PEACEFUL PLOUGH

SIR GEORGE C. M. BIRDWOOD, K.C.I.E.,  
C.S.I., M.D., LL.D.

When engaged in the contemplation of the creative power of the Almighty as manifested in the geography and general physiography of the Mahratta country, we are apt momentarily to regard merely human affairs and interests as altogether insignificant and contemptible; and to exclaim with the Hebrew Psalmist: "What is man that Thou art mindful of him? and the son of man that Thou visitest him?" And yet when we come to examine the wonderful ways in which the Mahratta *rayat*, or cultivator, has adapted himself to his surrounding conditions of soil and climate, and gradually secured his economic mastery over them, it seems to us again as though the Almighty had contrived them to no other end than to subserve the purposes of man; and as if indeed the Godhead's Self was

one with Nature, or the Divine Reason residing in the whole world, and in its parts, and adjusting and determining them all to the abiding well-being and highest happiness of man.

It is the simple agricultural life portrayed by Hesiod, Virgil, and Pliny, and by the *Scriptores* [Varro, Columella, Taurus *Æmilianus*, and Cato], *Rei Rusticae*, *Veteres Latini*. and by our own Tusser; but without the restless, hustling spirit of emulous competition that, from the first days of their enforced exodus from the East, has been the necessarily disturbing and disintegrating element in the agriculture, as in the general progressive civilisation, of the Aryas of the West. I do not mean that the steam-ploughing of England and America, if applied in India, would not augment the productiveness of its soil, or at least extend its area of production; although for all the social disadvantages resulting from the growth of large estates in the West, the only compensation England has over India in this respect of extended arable land, is that, while a fraction less than one-third of the surface of land and water is under cultivation in India, in England one-half of our total acreage is cultivated. But the point

of my defence is that as the Hindus maintain their natural interdependence and recognise their indissoluble fraternity as the first law of their social organisation (the responsibilities and obligations of which are enforced on all, from the highest to the lowest), it would be impossible to introduce prematurely the vaunted farming of England into India, even if its methods and appliances were in themselves improvements, without involving the destruction of the beneficent co-operative rural life whereon the whole system of the civilisation of the Hindus has been immemorially based. That system, and that life, like all else that is of human origin, are probably destined to disappear, and have already been affected by the economic changes of the twentieth century. But if we are wise, this disappearance will be gradual, through self-evolved changes in the internal consciousness of the race of Brahmanical Hindus. We are answerable for the happiness of the people of India, as distinguished from the "progress and prosperity" of their country, or, in other words, its scientific exploitation; consequently the last thing to be desired or encouraged by us is the hastening forward of the probably inevitable reconstruction of Hindu

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society by means for which the people of India are still unprepared, and which therefore could only act with destructive and revolutionary effect.

The introduction of the machinery of Western agriculture into India is quite impossible in the present economic condition of the country; and every attempt at it, in my experience, has proved a flagitious and farcical failure. I remember a steam plough being sent to Jamkhandi, one of the Southern Mahratta Native States. It was led out festooned with roses and jasmine, like an Indian bridegroom, into a rich *regar* field, and all of us who were called together to witness the prodigies it was to perform, were also wreathed with roses, and touched on our hands and foreheads with *atar*; and sprinkled all over with rose water. In a moment, with a snort, and a shriek, and a puff of smoky steam, the gigantic mechanism made a vigorous, loud-hissing rush forward, but, as was at once perceived, also gradually downward, until, after vainly struggling for a while against an ignominious fate, it at last settled down silently and fairly foundered in the furrow it had so deeply delved into the soft, yielding soil; and then not all the king's soldiers, and all the

king's men,' nor all the servants of the incensed Bhavani (Athene Boarmia, the "Ox-yoker" here), the hereditary blacksmiths and carpenters from the neighbouring palatine village, could do anything with the portentous monster. Nothing could be done with it as a steam plough. It had been recklessly brought into a sacrosanct economic system wherein it had no place, except as another god; and another god it was at once made. As soon as it could be moved out of the field it was sided into the village temple hard by; and there its huge steel share was set up on end, and bedaubed red, and worshipped as a *lingam*, the phallic symbol of Siva; and there, I suppose, it stands an object of worship to this day.

✓ The Indian plough is, in short, part and parcel of a fixed, crystallised life, wherein it is the primitive and primary integrant molecule, regulating the relations, and determining the dimensions, and the ultimate character of the entire and indissoluble economic, social, and religious system built up on it. In that life all are but co-ordinate parts of one undivided and indivisible whole, wherein the provision and respect due to every individual are enforced, under the highest religious

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sanctions, and every office and calling perpetuated from father to son by those cardinal obligations of caste on which the whole hierarchy of Hinduism hinges.

Thus the social aspects of a Deccan village are as of a large family, living together that united life of contentment in moderation which is the perfection of human felicity. The first sound heard in one of these villages after the deep stillness of the night and just before the dawn, is of "the house father", who having, on rising, worshipped the family gods, is now moving about quietly, with his head and shoulders still wrapped in the *chadar* ("sheet") wherein he has been sleeping, quietly arousing the bullocks and oxen, stalled either in a yard behind the house or in the porch in front. It is a devoutly soothing sound, for it tells you at once that you are among a people setting about their daily duties actually hand in hand with God.

Having got the cattle out into the road, and lit his cigarette of tobacco rolled in a leaf of the *apta* (*Bauhinia tomentosa*), and taken up his breakfast of *javari* or *bajri* cakes, cooked by his wife the day before, and tied up by her overnight in a cloth with an onion, or some pickle, he strolls off at daybreak, keeping his

oxen before him, to his fields. There yoking the oxen, and stripping to his work, whether it be to plough and to sow, or to reap, he works on for a steady hour until eight o'clock; and again, after ten or twenty minutes spent in eating his breakfast, for four hard fagging hours more until midday.

Ere yet he leaves his home, the voice of his wife is heard singing as she grinds out from the hand-mill the supply of flour for the day. This done, and the rooms all swept out and fresh cow-dunged, and the *tulsi* plant before the porch perambulated, and her own breakfast eaten, she cooks the dinner,—consisting of fresh-baked cakes of *bajri* or *javari* meal, and either a mess of pulse porridge, or a pot of highly spiced pulse soup—she must be careful to carry to her husband by twelve o'clock. The cultivators within hail of each other generally take this meal together; and after the four hours from breakfast spent in the furrows, or amongst the stubble, they devour it with obvious zest of appetite, joking and laughing heartily all the time; so true is it of the peasant proprietor's independent life all the world over:—

“*Pingue solum lassat, sed juvat ipse labor.*”  
Thus from half an hour to an hour is spent; and

then up to two or half-past two o'clock, the men lie down to sleep, lying where they had eaten, on their *cumblis*, or out-of-door woollen wrappers. While they sleep, the women dine off the scraps that are left, and then either at once return to their household duties and to prepare the supper, or before doing so, spend an hour or two assisting their husbands in the fields.

When the men awake they re-yoke the oxen, and resume their work for three hours more, or until the sun sets, at which signal they return in long winding lanes towards their respective villages, walking along leisurely, chatting and laughing, and always keeping their oxen before them. On reaching their homes, they at once tie up the cattle, and then, after bathing and again worshipping the household gods, the husband at eight o'clock partakes of his supper of pulse porridge.

After this the social life within the village—a life lived here, and now, and in every homeliest detail, with God and immortality—suddenly bursts into its brightest, happiest activity. The temples of the gods are in turn all visited: those of Mahadeo, "the Great God", meaning Siva, and Bhairava, an incarnation of Siva, and of Hanuman, and any other of

the lesser gods to whom there may be temples, or shrines, or altars, or but upraised, ruddled stones;—and these last are everywhere.

Hanuman, or “Long-Jaw”, is the favourite village god. Originally he was possibly the *totem* of the Vindhyan races of Central and Southern India; and he is adopted as their representative in the *Ramayana*. But in the official pantheon of the Brahmans he is a sort of satyr leader of the oreads and dryads of the wooded mountains and hills and dales of the Malabar coast and Gondwana: and as Arcadian Pan was the son of Hermes, so Hanuman is the son of Pavana, “the Vagrant”, “Vagabond” wind, or a personification of Vayu, who is “the Wind” also. He represents the sun as he seems, to those who pass through the forests of the Sahyadris, to leap from tree to tree above them. The gleams of light that shine suddenly on the wayfarer’s path through dark woods; the pleasurable earth-born glow that springs up in the youthful heart at the sight of the luxuriance of Nature; and again the feeling of awe that at times seizes the lonely traveller on suddenly coming on some uncanny spot—all these are Hanuman. Again, he is the lengthening shadows that steal at sunset through forests

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and across valleys, and from one hilltop to another.

The vocal cloud of dust that swept from Eleusis towards the Grecian fleet at Salamis, like a wafted echo of the songs of the Mysteries, the Hindus would probably interpret as a higher apparition of Hanuman. He is, indeed, the local personification of the vital power of Nature in its more familiar and more playful manifestations and emotions; and these the Hindus as naturally represent by a monkey as the Semites of Anterior Asia represented them by the wild goat, the *atadu* of the Assyrian inscriptions, and *ataud* of the Hebrews; names from which, through their Greek form, we derive the word satyr. Thus in Western, Southern, and Central India, Hanuman is everywhere the favourite divinity of the lower agricultural classes; whose innocent gaiety of heart, so promptly responsive to all the pleasanter conditions of their life, he precisely personifies: and in the Deccan villages the vicinity of his temples is always of an evening a popular rendezvous.

Every month, moreover, and indeed almost every week, some religious anniversary is celebrated; the principal among the agricultural

communities of the Deccan being the following five :

1. The Holi, or Saturnalia of the spring equinox, held towards the end of March.

2. The Dasara, or "Tenth", held early in October, when, after nine days of mourning for the ravages of Mahesh-asura—"the Buffalo-headed demon", from whom the State and city of Mysore take their name—on the tenth day, in joy for his destruction, by Bhavani, all the villagers, the higher and lower "twelve" hereditary village officials, the Brahmans, the whole body of the cultivators, and even the "sacrificer" or butcher within their gates, proceed in their gayest costumes to perambulate the village boundaries, and to worship the trees planted there, more especially, the *apta* (*Bauhinia tomentosa*), and, where it grows, also the *palas* (*Butea frondosa*). On this day also the Mahrattas of the great historic families celebrate the declaration of "The Great War in Bharata", the "epos" of the *Mahabharata*, between the Pandavas and their paternal cousins the Kauravas. Herald-ed by the arousing, archaic sounds of shawms and bagpipes and kettledrums—the last often mounted on a camel,—they sally forth from

their palaces into the westward wild ("jungle") in long, leisurely advancing cavalcades, their horses in full caparison of war, but festooned over their trappings with flowers; and themselves garlanded and crowned with flowers; and their spears, of many-coloured fluttering pennons, all hung with flowers. As they move along, gathering, from every *palas* tree they pass, its yellow blossoms, on returning, at the gloaming, homeward, they joyfully heap them on every woodland altar, or ruddled stone, by the wayside, calling them "gold" (*sona*),—as much as to say: "It would be gold—if we had it—that we would heap on you with the like largess of heart". And wherever these gallant Mahratta princes ride that day, in their ecstatic vision, the good Lord Sivaji rides on before.

3. The Devali, or "Feast of Lanterns" (literally "Lamp rows"), held twenty days after the Dasara, and celebrated amid the greatest rejoicings in honour of Lakshmi, the wife of Vishnu, as the goddess of "Good Luck", and of Sarasvati, the consort of Brahma, and goddess of learning, and protectress of bank-books, ledgers, and all money accounts. These three solemnities are commemorated by all classes of the community.

4 and 5. The two remaining festivals are kept up exclusively by the women, namely, the Nag Panchami, on July 25, in honour of the destruction of the serpent Kali by Krishna; and the Gauri, on August 25, in honour of Parvati in her epithet of Gauri, "the Yellow-Haired". The latter is specially observed by making up sweetmeats in the shape of round balls and eating a couple of them before going to bed. For two months beforehand songs in honour of Gauri are nightly rehearsed by the women. Their principal employment, however, of an evening is in visiting from house to house, arranging the marriages in the village, and settling the names of the latest-born babies. Every Mahratta family has its crest, and no marriages can take place between families having the same crest—a clear survival of totemism.

The Mahratta women of the *rayat* class, although they soon lose the good looks of their girlhood, are a fine, healthy race, tall and straight, modest, frank, and chatty; and in their yellow, or shot-red and purple, bodices (*choli*), and dark green, or indigo-blue robes (*sari*), are everywhere, in the fields, or in the village streets, welcome objects to the

artistic eye. The ladies of the higher castes, and particularly the *Deshast* Brahmanis, are very comely, although not so fair as their *Konkunast* sisters. They are all known at a glance by their great beauty and richer clothing; and as one of them sweeps past in her flowing *sari* of crimson, gold-bordered, nothing can be nobler than its glow against her olive flesh-tints, as it waves round her stately figure, and ripples in gold about her dainty feet, a study worthy of a Lombard master's canvas.

A great deal of conversation also goes on every evening with the village astrologer, especially as to the right day and hour for sowing the different kinds of crops; and it is quite surprising to find the full and accurate knowledge the humblest husbandmen show, in these consultations, of the exact time the sun enters the successive signs of the zodiac, whereby the sowing of rice, wheat, barley, *bajri*, *javari*, and every other sort of grain, pulse, and oil seed, etc., is scrupulously regulated. They prove themselves indeed as much at home around and about the zodiac, and among the burning stars, as in their own beloved fields, and with their conversable

cows and calves and ploughing oxen; and the picturesque, Propertian epigram:

“Nauta de stellis, de bobus arator”

is foiled of its antithesis in any reference to them.

All this intercourse conducted on the most familiar terms between the members of the same township, and in the open streets, by the light of the flaring oil lamps set, or hung, in every portico, and of the pillar of lamps, when occasionally lighted, before one or other of the temples, is of the most unaffected and cheering sociability:

“ . . . . that after, no repenting draws”.

By ten o'clock nearly everybody has gone to bed; except that when the songs of Tukaram, or the stories from the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* are sung on moonlight evenings, these joyous, blameless *al fresco* reunions may be kept up to nearly midnight. Then the deepest night again closes on each village, and its dependent hamlets, until six o'clock the next morning.

Thus in the division of the twenty-four hours the Deccan *rayat* has, for the past 3,000 years, realised the vainly-hoped-for ideal of

the English artisan, and at a twelfth of the cost:

“ Eight hours to work,  
Eight hours to play,  
Eight hours to sleep, |  
And eight *pennies* (not shillings) a day.”

He has realised also, and in its fullest security, the ideal co-operative life of the day-dreams of the Socialists of the West. And is not this co-operative agricultural life of the people of India high farming in its noblest sense?

Pliny, writing on the *Maxims of Ancient Agriculture* (bk.xviii. ch.8), asks: “In what way, then, can land be most profitably cultivated?” and answers: “Why, in the words of our agricultural oracles, ‘by making good out of bad’.” He adds: “But here it is only right that we should say a word in justification of our forefathers, who in their precepts on this subject, had nothing else in view but the benefit of mankind, for when they used the term ‘bad’ here, they only mean to say that which cost the smallest amount of money. The principal object with them was, in all cases, to cut down expenses to the lowest possible sum”. And further on, he quotes,

"that maxim of Cato, as profitable as it is humane: 'Always act (in farming) in such a way as to secure the love of your neighbours'."

The enactments embodied in the Code of Manu, and cognate law books of the Hindus, have achieved this consummation for India from before the foundation of Athens and Rome. Through all that dark backward, and abysm of time, we trace there the bright outlines of a self-contained, self-dependent, symmetrical, and perfectly harmonious industrial economy, deeply rooted in the popular conviction of its divine character, and protected, through every political and commercial vicissitude, by the absolute power and marvellous wisdom and tact of the Brahmanical priesthood. Such an ideal social order we should have held impossible of realisation, but that it continues to exist, and to afford us, in the yet living results of its daily operation in India, a proof of the superiority, in so many unsuspected ways, of the hieratic civilisation of antiquity over the secular, joyless, inane, and self-destructive, modern civilisation of the West. Of a truth, it is in the contemplation of the practical workings of this socialistic system of the Code of Manu

that the sympathetic Englishman in India drinks deepest of the bliss of knowing others blest.

And this is the “unhappy India” of the writers on that country, who know not the things that really belong to her peace, and have acquired all their knowledge of it from “Statistical Abstracts” and “Blue Books”. Unhappy India, indeed! I might rather bemoan the unhappiness of England, where faith for nearly four centuries has had no fixed centre of authority; where political factions rage so furiously that men seem to have lost all sense of personal dignity and public shame, confusing right with wrong, and wrong with right, and excusing the vilest treasons against the commonwealth on the plea of party necessity; where every national interest is sacrificed to the shibboleth of unrestricted international competition; and where, as a consequence, agriculture, the only sure foundation of society, languishes; and the peaceful plough, the mainspring of industrial activity, no longer holds its proper place of public honour and pre-eminence:—and no longer is heard throughout our land, from far across the freshly fluted furrows, the lulling lilts of the lowly ploughman, who, as

he sturdily plods his heavily clodded way,  
“Sweetens his labour with some rural song.”

The truth is that closet publicists and politicians, trained in the competitive economic principles of the West, do not sufficiently distinguish between the prosperity of a country and the felicity of its inhabitants. Indeed, they do not discern the distinction. They dwell with their books, and not among the people; and that men do not live by bread alone is one of the strongest facts of life in India absolutely hidden from their eyes.

What we call prosperity exists only in figures, and has no place in the personal experience of the vast masses making up the population of the so-called “progressive” nations of the West. It merely means the accumulation of amazing wealth in the hands of a few, by the devouring, wolfish spoliation of the many: and in its last result, the bitter, stark, and cruel contrast presented between the West End of London and the East. And do Europe and America desire to reduce all Asia to an East End?

Happy India! where all men may still possess themselves in natural sufficiency and

contentment, and freely find their highest joys in the spiritual beliefs, or, let it be, illusions, that have transformed their trade union organisation into a veritable "Civitas Dei".

Happy India, indeed! But how long before the Saturnian reign shall be brought to the same end in India as it was in Europe four centuries ago? The sight of our manufacturing and commercial wealth, the fruit of our competitive civilisation, so deceptively beautiful without, but within full of gall and ashes, like the apples of Sodom, has inflamed the people of India, in the neighbourhood of Calcutta and Bombay, with the same insatiable greed of gold as the opulence of Rome excited in the barbarians who were provoked by it—"the Nibelungs gold"—to the destruction of the Empire; and wherewith again the ancient and mediæval fables of "the Riches of the East" inflamed the avarice, in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, of the renascent nations of the West, and lured them on, in speculative quest of India, to the huge invention of the Americas.

Through this contact between the East and the West at the Presidency towns the traditional ideal of life among the Parsis and Hindus is gradually becoming superseded

by the Western ideal—according to which the basis of all social advancement, and the standard of all moral worth, is the possession of money. That hangs on the hazard of a crude competition, in the prizes whereof but few, of the many called, are chosen to participate. Thus in the place of the old-world content with the conditions of existence, we are arousing in India a universal spirit of discontent, the characteristic incentive of modern civilisation, and have needlessly exaggerated it through the malign influences of the fastidiously secular system of eleemosynary education enforced by us on the country. The sinister shadow, as of the legendary Upas tree, on Western civilisation, is the slow poisoning, wherever it becomes rooted, of the vital atmosphere of the spiritual life latent in our human nature; and there was no necessity for anticipating, by a direct attack on the ancestral faiths of the people of India, the inevitable catastrophe that has everywhere dogged the steps of exclusively material civilisations, and at last involved them in self-destruction.

Examining in 1863 or 1864 some Parsi boys in the Fort School in Bombay, on my asking the meaning of the word "happiness", one of

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them instantly stretching out his arm toward me replied energetically, and with the applause of all his little class fellows: "To make a crore of rupees (at that time equal to £1,000,000) in cotton speculations, and drive into (*sic*) a carriage and four"—adding, however, in the yet uncorrupted spirit of the boundless philanthropy of the ancient Buddhism of Asia—"and to give away lakhs upon lakhs in charity":—and as well in princely public benefaction, as in inexhaustible private done and dole. Many years ago a distinguished Bengali Brahman, to whom I was pointing out that he was not in the least obliged to break formally with the religion of his forefathers because he was an "Agnostic", replied:—"You do not understand. It is not simply your education that has made me an Agnostic; I have rather been forced to become one by the high standard of civilised life you have set up in India. I really cannot afford to be a Hindu, and spend so much as a good Hindu must on his 'undivided family', and in general charity—not if I am to keep up appearances, on the same income as Christian and Muslim gentlemen, who have no such compulsory demands on their means".

Thus the lesson of the Indian plough, if rightly read, goes deep; and he who runs may read it; and the deepest gulf before England is that we are ourselves digging, by forcing the insular institutions of this country on the foreign soil of India. That is the special lesson of the English steamplough laid up, in divinity, in the Jamkhandi State.

VIKRAMA AND URVASI;  
OR  
HERO AND NYMPH  
MRS. CHARLOTTE MANNING

The drama commences with what is called a prelude. The manager enters, and pronounces an address or benediction.

“May that Siva, who is attainable by devotion and faith; to whom alone the name of Lord (Iswara) is applicable, and who is sought with suppressed breath by those who covet final emancipation, bestow upon you final felicity.”

Then addressing the actors, he says:

“Many assemblies have witnessed the composition of former dramatic bards; I, therefore propose to exhibit one not hitherto represented, the drama of Vikrama and Urvasi. Desire the company to be ready to do justice to their respective parts.”

*Actor.* "I shall, sir."

*Manager.* "I have now only to request the audience that they will listen to this work of Kâlidâsâ with attention and kindness."

Whilst he is yet speaking, a cry is heard behind the scenes of "Help, help!" and a troop of Apsarasas, or nymphs of heaven, enter in the air.

Although the king was a mortal, he was fond of straying amid the heavenly precincts on the peaks of the Himalaya.

The scene represents part of this range of hills. The nymphs cry:

"Help, help! if any friend be nigh,  
To aid the daughters of the sky."

The king appears in his chariot, driven by a charioteer. He learns that the most lovely of the nymphs has been torn from her companions, and carried off by a *Danava*. He hastens to the rescue, and so swift is his progress, that the waving chowry<sup>1</sup> on the steeds' broad brow points backward,

<sup>1</sup> "The white bushy tail of the Tibet cow, fixed on a gold or ornamented shaft, rose from between the ears of the horse, like the plume of the war horse of chivalry; the banner, or banneret, with the device of the chief, rose at the back of the car; sometimes several little triangular flags were mounted on its sides".—H. H. Wilson, Hindu Theatre, vol. i., p. 200, note.

motionless ; and backwards streams the banner from the breeze.

The nymphs await his return on a mountain peak. Soon they cry :

“Joy, sisters, joy ; the king advances.  
High o'er yonder ridgy rampart dances  
The deer-embazoned banner. See!  
The heavenly car rolls on.”

Slowly the king returns, bearing in his car the fainting Urvasi, and making his way with difficulty up a rocky ascent. He restores the damsel to her companions. Their congratulations and embraces, with which they greet her, are interrupted by a noise, which is accounted for by the charioteers exclaiming :

“Sire, from the east the rushing sound is heard  
Of mighty chariots ; yonder, like clouds, they roll  
Along the mountain cliffs ; now there alights  
A chief in gorgeous raiment, like the blaze  
Of lightning playing on the tow'ring precipice.”

This newly arrived personage is the king of the Gandharbas, come to deliver Urvasi from the *Danava* or *Dasyu*. He is very polite to the king, and does not object to his admiration of the nymph. For the present, however, the nymphs or Apsarasas must all return to their heavenly home.

King Purûravas gazes after their vanishing forms, with his heart “full of idle dreams, inspired by idle love”.

The scene of the second Act is on earth, at the city of Prayâga. Mânava, the confidential companion of the king, is in the palace garden, lamenting the trouble of having a king’s secret to keep.

“Going so much into company as I do, I shall never be able to set a guard upon my tongue. I must be prudent, and will stay here by myself in this retired temple, until my royal friend comes forth from the council chamber.” (Sits down and covers his face with his hands.)

The queen’s confidential attendant enters, saying to herself that her mistress, the daughter of the king of Benares, is sure that her husband is changed since his return from the regions of the sun. She perceives Mânava, and says, “if that crafty Brâhman be in the secret, I shall easily get at it. A secret can rest no longer in his breast, than morning dew on the grass.”

“There he sits”, she continues, “deep in thought, like a monkey in a picture.”

Artfully she makes him think that the king has already betrayed his secret, and so he is led to allow that ever since the king saw the Apsaras, Urvásí, he has been out of his senses, "he not only neglects Her Grace, but annoys me, and spoils my dinner".

The attendant goes back to her royal mistress, and the king arrives very dull and very silent. He says to Mánava, "What shall we do for recreation ?" Mánava replies,

"Pay a visit to the kitchen".

*King.* "With what intent ?"

*Man.* "Why, the very sight of the savoury dishes in course of preparation will be sufficient to dissipate all melancholy ideas".

This proposal not being agreeable to the king, Mánava tries to make him observe the beauty of the garden, "heralding, as it were, the presence of the spring". The king replies,

"I mark it well. In the *kuruvaka*<sup>1</sup>  
Behold the painted fingers of the fair  
Red-tinted on the tip and edged with ebony ;  
Here the asoka puts forth nascent buds,  
Just bursting into flowers; and here the mango  
Is brown with blossoms, on whose tender crests  
Scant lies the fragrant down".<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Oleander.

<sup>2</sup> H. H. Wilson, Hindu Theatre, vol. i, pp. 210-212.

Mânava proposes that they should repose in a "bower of jasmines, with its slab of black marble". Whilst enjoying this luxurious retreat, Urvasi and a companion hover around them in the air. Being themselves invisible, they overhear the king lamenting for Urvasi, longing for her presence, and calling her cold and unfeeling. Hereupon, Urvasi takes a *leaf*, and inscribing her thoughts upon it, lets it fall near Mânava, who quickly picks it up. The king only longs the more to meet "face to face, eye encountering eye". He bids Mânava take care of the leaf, which he does not; for shortly after, Urvasi became visible, and he was so fascinated, that the leaf dropped from his hands. The interview is hastily ended by a summons from above, requiring the presence of Urvasi and her companion at the palace of the Lord of Air.

At this moment, the queen and her attendant enter the garden. They find the leaf, and understand the lines inscribed upon it. Going to the arbour, they hear the king saying that he is in every way unhappy. The queen steps forward and bids him be consoled, if, as she thinks, the loss of the leaf which she presents, is the cause of his distress. The king is shamefaced, and denies his interest

in the leaf. The queen objects to his want of truth, and the Brâhman wag, Mânava, says to her :

“Your Grace had better order dinner; that will be the most effectual remedy for His Majesty’s bile”.

The king falls at her feet; the queen calls him an awkward penitent, and not to be trusted, and then goes off. Mânava remarks that “Her Majesty has gone off in a hurry, like a river in the rains”; and, after a little talk, he says that “it is high time to bathe and eat”, and the king assents, saying :

“Tis past mid-day. Exhausted by the heat,  
 The peacock plunges in the scanty pool  
 That feeds the tall tree’s root; the drowsy bee  
 Sleeps in the hollow chamber of the lotus,  
 Darkened with closing petals; on the brink  
 Of the now tepid lake the wild duck lurks  
 Amongst the sedgy shade; and even here  
 The parrot from his wiry bower complains,  
 And calls for water to allay his thirst”.

And this closes the second Act.

In the third Act, the manner in which the discarded queen faced adversity, is represented. She makes a vow to forego her ornaments, and to hold a rigid fast until the moon enters the asterism Rohinî; and then on the night on which this event is expected, she sends the chamberlain to tell the king

that having dismissed all anger and resentment, she is desirous of seeing him for the completion of a rite in which she is engaged. The chamberlain appears on the stage, waiting for the king, who is expected to pass that way. He declares himself thankful for the close of the day, when the "peacocks nod upon their perches, and the doves flock to the turret tops, scarcely distinguishable from the incense that flows through the lattices of the lofty chambers". The venerable servants of the inner apartments now substitute lamps for the offerings of flowers. "Ah! here comes the prince, attended by the damsel train, with flambeaux in their delicate hands". The chamberlain advances to the king, saying that the queen has expressed a wish to be honoured with his presence on the terrace of the pavilion of gems, to witness from it the entrance of the moon into the asterism Rohini.

The king assents; and his companion, Mânava, observes the pavilion of gems is particularly lovely in the evening. "The moon is just about to rise. The east is tinged with red". When the moon appears, Mânava cries out that it is "as beautiful as a ball of almonds and sugar". The king

reproves him for having thoughts, prompted by his stomach; and himself addresses the moon, as "Glorious lord of night, whose tempered fires are gleaned from solar fountains, to light the flame of holy sacrifice". . . . Mánava says, "Enough, sir! your grandfather bids you by me his interpreter sit, that he may repose himself". They both sit, and the train and torches are dismissed. Urvásí and her companion enter above in a celestial car, and whilst invisible to mortals, witness the ensuing scene.

The queen enters, dressed in white; flowers are her only ornaments; in her hands she bears offerings. Mánava observes, that Her Majesty looks very charming. The king replies: "In truth she pleases me. Thus chastely robed in modest white; her clustering tresses, decked with sacred flowers alone; her haughty mien exchanged for meek devotion". She and the king greet each other. Urvásí remarks to her aerial companion that "he pays her mighty deference".

The queen goes through the usual form of presenting the oblation of fruits, perfumes, flowers; and then paying homage to the king, says: "Hear and attest the sacred promise

that I make my husband. Whatever nymph attract my lord's regard, and share with him the mutual bonds of love, I henceforth treat with kindness and complacency".

These words greatly relieve the invisible Urvasî; but the imprudent Mânava asks whether the queen has become indifferent to His Majesty; and then she says, emphatically: "To promote his happiness, I have resigned my own. Does such a purpose prove him no longer dear to me?" The queen then departs, and is neither seen nor heard of more, until the close of the drama. Urvasî now becomes visible, and says playfully to the king, that he has been presented to her by the queen; and, from this time, she is looked upon as his wife and his queen.

In the fourth Act, this newly-married pair are in trouble. Urvasî had persuaded her husband to resign the cares of government, and go with her into a heavenly grove, somewhere amid the mountains. But, unhappily, whilst in each other's company, the king looked for a moment at a nymph of air, who was gambolling on the sandy shore of a river. This aroused the jealous wrath of Urvasî, and, repelling her lord, she heedlessly rushed into a "hateful grove", forbidden to

females. As the penalty of the transgression, she was changed into a slender vine tree; and the frantic king thenceforward wandered about both by day and by night in searching his lost bride throughout the forest. He comes on to the stage, which represents a part of the forest, with his dress disordered, and his general appearance indicative of insanity; he sings,

“The lonely cygnet breasts the flood  
Without his mate, in mournful mood.  
His ruffled plumage drooping lies,  
And trickling tears suffuse his eyes.”

For a moment, he mistakes a cloud for a demon; then cooling raindrops fall, he faints, revives, and sings again,

“I madly thought a fiend conveyed  
Away from me my fawn-eyed maid:  
'Twas but a cloud that rained above,  
With the young lightning for its love.”

He entreats the clouds to help him; then suddenly determines to assert his kingly power, and to bid the seasons stay their course. (He sings,)

“The tree of heaven invites the breeze,  
And all its countless blossoms glow.  
They dance upon the gale; the bees  
With sweets inebriate, murmuring low  
Soft music lend, and gushes strong  
The *koil's* deep, thick, warbling song.”

Then feeling that all nature attests his kingly state, for a moment he exults. But this mood is quickly succeeded by despondency, and he exclaims, "What have I to do with pomp and kingly pride? My sole sad business to thread the woods in search of my beloved". (He sings,)

"The monarch of the woods,  
With slow desponding gait,  
Wanders through vales and floods,  
And rocks and forest bowers,  
Gemmed with new springing flowers,  
And mourns heart-broken for his absent mate."

In his anxiety to obtain tidings, he determines to enquire of a peacock, which he sees perched on a jutting crag.

"Birds of the dark-blue throat, and eye of jet,  
Oh! tell me have you seen the lovely face  
Of my fair bride? lost in this dreary wilderness."<sup>1</sup>

The peacock shows no sympathy, and the king proceeds. (Music is heard continually.)

"Yonder (sings the king) amid the thick and shady branches  
Of the broad *jambu*,<sup>2</sup> cowls the *koil*; faint  
Her flame of passion in the hotter breath  
Of noon. She of the birds is wisest famed—  
I will address her.

<sup>1</sup> H. H. Wilson, Hindu Theatre, vol. i., p. 246.

<sup>2</sup> Rose-apple, with flowers similar to the myrtle.

## 36 LEAVES FROM INDIAN CULTURE

Say, nursling of a stranger nest—

Say; hast thou chanced my love to see,  
Amidst these gardens of the blest,  
Wandering at liberty ;  
Or, warbling with a voice divine,  
Melodious strains more sweet than thine.”

He entreats this bird, “whom lovers deem love’s messenger”, to lead his steps to where she strays. And then, as if the *koil* had spoken, he turns to his left, saying:

“Why did she leave  
One so devoted to her will ? In wrath  
She left me ? but the cause of anger lives not  
In my imagination. The fond tyranny  
That women exercise o'er those who love them,  
Brooks not the slightest shew of disregard.  
How, now ; the bird has flown. 'Tis even thus—  
All coldly listen to another's sorrows.”

For a moment he thinks he hears the sweet chime of his “fair one’s anklets”. But it is merely the cry of the swan, preparing for periodic flight. To the chief of the troops of swans he addresses the same enquiry. The walk of the swan is much admired by Hindu poets, and the king means nothing ludicrous when he says to the swan—

“Why seek to veil the truth ? If my beloved  
Was never seen by thee, as graceful straying  
Along the flowery borders of the lake,  
Then whence this elegant gait ? 'Tis hers ; and thou

Hast stolen it from her ; in whose every step  
 Love sports. Thy walk betrays thee ; own thy crime.  
 And lead me quickly to her (laughs). Nay, he fears  
 Our royal power—the plunderer flies the king.”

Other birds, and bees, and lotus flowers  
 attract his attention. “I will hence”, he  
 cries.

“Beneath the shade of yon kadamba tree  
 The royal elephant reclines, and with him  
 His tender mate. I will approach ; yet, hold ;  
 From his companion he accepts the bough  
 Her trunk has snapp'd from the balm-breathing tree,  
 Now rich with teeming shoots and juicy fragrance.”

At length he perceives a gem, “more  
 roseate than the blush of the asoka blossom”.  
 He is unwilling to take the jewel, because  
 she whose brow it should have adorned is far  
 away. A voice in the air bids him take  
 up the gem,—for it has wondrous virtue.  
 Let it adorn his hand, and he will shortly  
 cease to mourn his absent bride. He obeys ;  
 and immediately he feels a strange emotion,  
 as he gazes on a vine ;—no blossoms deck  
 the boughs. “No bees regale her with their  
 songs ; silent and sad, she lonely shows the  
 image of his repentant love, who now laments  
 her causeless indignation”. He presses the  
 “melancholy likeness to his heart”,—and the  
 vine changes into Urvasi. After affectionate

explanations and expressions of delight at their reunion, they return to the city which "mourns its absent lord", making "a cloud their downy car, to waft them swiftly on their way". Music is heard, and the invisible voice, or chorus, sings :

"The ardent swan his mate recovers,  
And all his spirit is delight ;  
With her aloft in air he hovers,  
And homeward wings his joyous flight."

And then, on an English stage, no more would be expected. The finale has been brilliant; and the future life of the chief actors may be imagined. But the Sanskrit dramatist gives another Act, in which it is explained rather lengthily, that when the king, and his queen Urvasi, return to Prayâga, his old friend Mânava rejoices, because he finds the king "once more attentive to his royal duties and the cares of State", but, he thinks, out of spirits,—and wonders what should be the cause; for, "except the want of children, he has nothing to grieve for". "This", he observes, "is a bustling day. The king and the queen have just performed their royal ablutions, where the Yamunâ (Jumna) and the Ganges meet: he must be at his toilet by this time, and by joining him I shall

secure a share of the flowers and perfumes prepared for him." A noise is heard behind the scenes, with cries of, "the ruby ! the ruby !" It appears that a hawk had carried off the ruby of reunion. The king, in haste, demands his bow; but the bird has already flown too far away. He commands that it be tracked to its perch; and, whilst all are in excitement and confusion, the chamberlain enters with an arrow and the jewel: the shaft of a forester had performed the king's bidding. The king looks eagerly at the arrow to see the name inscribed on it. Mānava says: "What does your Majesty study so earnestly?" The king replies "Listen to the words inscribed: 'The arrow of the all-subduing Ayus, the son of Urvasi and Purûravas'." The king is in amazement, because, excepting for the period of the Naimisha sacrificial rite, Urvasi has always been with him. He does, however, remember that, for a transient period, "her soft cheek was paler than the leaf, cold-nipped, and shrivelled". Mānava tells him that he must not suppose that the nymphs of heaven manage these matters in the fashion of those on earth; and then, whilst yet they are talking, a saintly dame and a young lad

from the hermitage of the Rishi Chyavana are announced. The likeness of the lad to the king at once identifies him. The saintly dame addresses the king, saying: "This princely youth, the son of Urvasi, was for some cause confided, without your knowledge, to my secret care. The ceremonies suited to his martial birth have been duly performed by the pious Chyavana, who has given him the knowledge fitted to his station, and has trained him to the use of arms." "But now", she adds, "my charge expires; for an act, this day achieved, unfits him to remain one of the peaceful hermitage: this act was,—shooting the hawk, which 'deed of blood excludes him from our haunts': therefore, by the sage's order she has now conducted him to Urvasi. The king sends for his queen, Urvasi, who recognises her boy; and they are all too much affected to think of explanations, until the "saintly dame" is gone. Then Urvasi weeps violently, remembering, that when love for the king induced her to leave the courts of heaven, she had been warned, that so soon as the king should see a son of hers, she must return. From fear of this, she had kept her infant's birth concealed. If, indeed, Urvasi

must again be torn from him, the king says he will live in the woods, and resign the throne to his son. All present express grief, when, suddenly, the divine Nârada descends upon the stage, and announces that Indra commands him to forego his purpose of ascetic sorrow. Hostilities in heaven are predicted, when the gods will need his prowess; but he promises—

“Urvast shall be through life united  
With thee in heavenly bonds.”

Nârada now assists at the inauguration of Ayus, as vice-king. Nymphs descend from heaven, with a golden vase of water from the Ganges, a throne, and other paraphernalia. The rite being concluded, a chorus is heard without, invoking blessings upon Ayus:

“Son of the monarch the universe filling,  
Son of the god of the mist-shedding night,  
Son of the sage, whom the great Brahma, willing,  
Called, with creation, to life and to light.”

A second chorus follows, celebrating the sceptre and sway which the father has won:

“And brighter than ever the radiance is streaming,  
Enhanced and confirmed by the same of the son:  
So Ganga descends from the peaks of the mountain,  
That shine with the light of unperishing snows;  
And mighty,—meandering far from their fountain,—  
In the breast of the ocean the waters repose”.

Urvasi bids her child come and offer to the queen, his elder mother, filial homage. No other allusion is made to the first wife. The last words of the drama are the following curious benediction from the king:

"May learning and prosperity oppose  
No more each other, as their wont, as foes;  
But, in a friendly bond together twined,  
Ensure the real welfare of mankind."

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## NATURAL RELIGION IN INDIA

SIR ALFRED C. LYALL

I shall not endeavour to give, in this single lecture, any general description of Indian Religions. Nor do I propose to make any appreciable addition to the vast heap of facts and anecdotes, fables and folklore, that have been already collected in support of different theories regarding the origin of myth, ritual, primitive worships, and rudimentary belief. My present purpose is to draw attention, briefly, to the particular importance of India as a field of observation and research in identifying and tracing through connected stages the growth and filiation of some of the principal ideas that undoubtedly lie at the roots of Natural Religion. When I speak of Religion in India, I mean, for the purpose of this Lecture, Hinduism. And if I were asked for a definition of Hinduism, I could give no precise answer; I could not define it concisely by giving its central doctrines and its

essential articles of faith; as I might do in describing one of the great historical Religions. For the word Hindu is not exclusively a religious denomination; it denotes also a country, and to a certain degree a race. When we speak of a Christian, a Mahomedan, or a Buddhist, we mean a particular religious community, in the widest sense, without distinction of race or place. When we talk of a Russian or a Persian, we indicate country or parentage without distinction of creed. But when a man tells me that he is a Hindu, I know that he means all three things together—Religion, Parentage, and Country. I can be almost sure that he is an inhabitant of India, I know that he is an Indian by birth and descent; and as to his religion, the word Hindu, though it is rather indefinite, undoubtedly places him within one of the many groups or castes that follow the ordinances and worship the gods who are recognised by the Brahmans.

I would ask you to remark that we have here at once, at the first word, a significant indication of the peculiar character and composition of Hinduism. This triple meaning or connotation of the term Hindu shows the complexity of its origin, shows how Hinduism

is twisted deep among the roots of Indian society, how it is a matter of birthright and inheritance; signifies that it means civil community, quite as much as a religious association—that a man does not become a Hindu, but is born into Hinduism.

Let me illustrate this view of Hinduism, as different in type, origin, and constitution from the other great Religions, by pointing to its position on what I may call a Religious map of the world—I suppose that in fact the geographical areas occupied by the chief religions have often been mapped out. We may put aside Africa as wholly barbarous and benighted, except where its edges have been touched by light from Asia. Then such a map, supposing that it gave only the broad outlines and divisions, would exhibit all Europe and America overspread by Christianity, and in Asia it would show that the three grand Historic Faiths or Creeds—Christianity, Islam, and Buddhism—have made a nominal partition of the whole continent, with the notable exception of one country. It would be seen that in all the three continents there is one, and only one, country of the first magnitude, only one large population of settled civilisation, that

is not annexed to, or at least claimed by, one or another of these three spiritual empires; and that people are the Hindus. If we mark off roughly the spheres of religion in Asia, we may assign the north-eastern provinces of the Russian empire, including Siberia, to Christianity. In western and central Asia, from the Red Sea and the Mediterranean to the borders of India and the Chinese empire, the religion is, speaking broadly, Mahomedan. On the other side, in eastern and north-eastern Asia, throughout China, in Japan, Burma, and Siam, the established Church, the Faith that is incontestably predominant, though not exclusively accepted, is Buddhist. So that while in the north, the west, and the centre of Asia the people and their rulers are worshippers of one God, in the whole of eastern Asia Buddhism, which acknowledges no supreme personal deity, still holds the chief place, and maintains a kind of high catholic dominion. The people who stand between but stand apart from both monotheism and Buddhism, are the Hindus; they are the sole surviving representatives of a great polytheistic system. We have in India a population that has been incessantly conquered politically, but never

overpowered or subdued spiritually; it has expelled Buddhism, successfully resisted Islam, and has been very little affected even by Christianity. Hinduism has preserved its independence between two powerful and imposing religious sovereignties—between Islam, the Faith militant, and Buddhism, the Faith contemplative, the religion of action and the religion of thought. The 200 millions of Hindus constitute the only considerable section of more or less civilised humanity that does not at this moment acquiesce in the religious authority of Buddha, or Mahomet, or of some Christian Church.

Now it must always be remembered that the Indians are not a rude and unintelligent folk upon whom great intellectual movements take little hold. On the contrary, they are the most subtle-minded and profoundly devout people in Asia. And so far am I from regarding Hinduism as unconnected with the deeper currents of spiritual ideas, that I take India to be one of the religious watersheds of the world. I mean that as from some high ridge or plateau the rivers rise and run down into distant lands, so from India there has been a large outflow of religious ideas over

Asia. It has, of course, been the fountain-head of Buddhism, which has flooded, as I have said, all eastern Asia; while I believe that the influence of Indian theosophy spread at the beginning of the Christian era as far west as Alexandria and Antioch. I am told that it profoundly affected the ancient religion of Persia; and it may be traceable later in the mysticism of the Persian Sufis. But while the religious thought of India has thus radiated out east and west across the Asiatic Continent, I doubt whether Hinduism, the immemorial religion of the Indian people, has in all these ages assimilated a single important or prolific idea from outside India. The current of ideas is not always above ground, it often subsides and reappears; but it seems to me to have flowed steadily out of India; until its natural course was disturbed by the violent irruption of Islam. It is in this manner that Hinduism may be said to represent high religious ground that has been for ages a dividing line between the great religious systems that have overspread the countries on either side of it. Its characteristic is the entire absence of system; it has never been under the political control or regulation of a State; it has never

been organised ecclesiastically. For, in the first place, the long dominion in India of foreigners, aliens in race and religion, seems to me not only to have arrested the intellectual development of Hinduism during the last eight hundred years, but also to have kept it in a dislocated and inorganic condition. And secondly, the Hindu priesthood, though powerful, has never been able to bring within specific limits the wandering beliefs of an intensely superstitious people. The Brahmans exercise immense authority, yet they have never obtained any effective mastery over the incessant movements and changes of belief and ritual in Hinduism. The result has been that there prevails, and has always prevailed, a great incoherence and diversity in the divine affairs of India ; there has been a loose and luxuriant growth of religious fancies and usages ; and the religion has become a conglomerate of rude worship and high liturgies ; of superstitions and philosophies, belonging to very different phases of society and mental culture. I doubt whether there is anything like it in any other part of the world. And I regard Hinduism as a survival from those early ages when in the midst of a highly organised civil society

Religion was still in a state of confusion ; before the rise and establishment of the great historic Churches and Creeds which have since made a partition of the old world, from Ireland eastward to the Indus. From looking closely at India as it is we can best form a notion of ancient polytheism, not such as that which in Europe we have for centuries called paganism because it lingered longest in the rural districts, but polytheism before its decline and fall, when it was the religion of the civilised world under the Roman Empire. Such is popular Hinduism as we still see it flourishing in India ; and for the purposes of this lecture I propose to call it Natural Religion.

Now I do not of course use the term Natural Religion in the sense given to it by Bishop Butler, when he said that Christianity was a re-publication of Natural Religion. He meant, I think, religion according to right reason, framed upon the principle of accepting the course and constitution of Nature as an index of the Divine Will. The meaning that I wish to convey is of Religion in what Hobbes would call a State of Nature, moulded only by circumstances and feelings, and founded upon analogies drawn sometimes with ignorant

simplicity, sometimes with great subtlety, from the operation of natural agencies and phenomena. The presence, the doings, and the character of numerous superhuman beings are thus directly inferred from what actually happens to men in the world around them ; and a mysterious kind of design is perceived in every uncommon motion, or shape, or sensation. What is it that evidently suggests the intentions and sets the model of divinity thus realised ? Nothing but capricious and freely acting Nature ; the religious feeling works by taking impressions or reflections, sometimes rough and grotesque, sometimes refined and artistic, from all that men hear and feel and see. This is what I desire to call Natural Religion, because it has grown up in this manner spontaneously out of the free play of man's fears and hopes, and his guesses at the truth of this unintelligible world. I mean a religion that has not yet acquired a distinctive form and a settled base, but is constantly springing up and reproducing itself under different shapes, in diverse species ; and throwing out varieties of rite and worship according to the changing needs and conditions of the people. I have no doubt whatever that in many uncivilised

countries something of this kind is always going on. But I believe that in no modern country has Natural Religion been as long undisturbed, or has reached anything like the height or expansion that it has attained in India. My point is that Hinduism can be seen growing, that one can discern the earliest notions, rude and vague, among the primitive jungle tribes, that one can see the same ideas and practices upon a higher level, in more distinct and reasonable shape, among the settled classes; and that one can follow them upwards until they merge into allegory, mysticism, or abstract philosophical conceptions. I think that it is possible to trace in India, less obscurely than elsewhere, the development of natural experiences into supernatural beliefs. I do not pretend that India contains any very rare or unusual kinds of ritual or worship; for nothing is more remarkable than the persistent similarity of such ideas and practices among primitive folk. What makes India so valuable as a field of observation, is that the various forms and species lie close together in one country at the same time, so that their differences and affinities can be compared. In short, I believe that India, from its position in the world,

from its past history, from its present state, and because it is an antique society thoroughly accessible to modern research, presents an almost unique opportunity for the comprehensive study of the history of Natural Religion.

The time at my disposal to-day only allows me to illustrate this position by reference to a few of the most universal and prolific among primary religious beliefs. Let me take the theory that Dreams and Ghosts are the sources of the earliest superstitions—it is a theory much in vogue at the present time, though it is by no means a modern discovery. Now the evidence that can be collected and brought to bear from India on this theory is abundant and exceedingly impressive, because it brings out perceptible links and gradations between spirit worship and the adoration of the higher divinities.

Fear is a primordial affection of the human mind; and the continual terror which haunts savage men, as it does wild animals, and which is at the bottom of all superstition, seems to have been originally little more than the instinctive fright at strange sounds and sights that we can still see in domestic animals. We can judge how strong this terror must have been by noticing how long it has

lasted. Just as the shying of a horse at a bush is the survival of the ancestral instinct that made his far-off progenitors shun anything strange and therefore dangerous, so, I think, the unreasoning horror that is apt to come over people at the image of a ghost, or even at a ghost story, is traceable backward to the times when our ancestors felt themselves to be surrounded by capricious or malignant beings. The fear of ghosts is the faint shadow still left on our imaginations by the universal belief of primitive folk that they were haunted by the spirits of the dead.

Now the essential characteristic of ghosts is given better by the French word than by the English—it is a *Revenant*, one that returns. And if I were asked to make a conjecture why this notion of the return or reappearance of a dead man's spirit is so widespread, I should reply by pointing to the one fundamental fact, the first and most formidable law—that comes home to all men and partly I suspect to some of the higher animals—the endless succession in Nature of birth, death, and revival. I do not think it possible to overrate the deep impression that must be engraved on the minds of the early races of mankind by the continual perishing and

reproduction of all animate things. To man in his wild state the same life appears to stir in everything, in running water, in a tree, and in a creature; it ends and disappears in everything at times, but it reappears again constantly, in shape, movement, and outward character so similar as to seem identical; conveying the inference that something has gone and come again; there is nothing around a savage to suggest that the animating principle of vitality suffers more than suspension or displacement. The analogy of Nature affords him no presumption that death means extinction, while his imagination supplies him with constant evidence to the contrary.

But however this may be, one thing seems sure, whatever may be the reason of it, that although the fact that all men die rests upon the most direct, conclusive, and unquestionable evidence, constantly renewed, yet no race of men ever seems to have accepted death as the certain end of the dead man's personality. Among primitive folk the presumption seems to have been exactly the reverse; they are all convinced that his soul has only gone elsewhere; they do not regard life as extinguished; they look for signs and

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tokens of it somewhere else; and they are incessantly haunted, asleep or awake, with the apparitions of familiar forms or hints of a familiar presence. This incapacity or desperate refusal to acquiesce in the finality of death powerfully affects all the primitive races of India; and it is my opinion that the notion of the survival, reappearance, and transmission of the soul or spirit runs like a spinal cord through the whole connected series of the beliefs that are comprised in Hinduism. It pervades, I think, all classes of Indian society; it is the chief motive of ritual, it explains the origin of many divinities, and it underlies some of the cardinal doctrines of high Brahmanic orthodoxy. The notion is seen very plainly in the least advanced societies. The Khasia Hills, for example, are peopled by a very simple folk, whom until lately the propagation of Brahmanism had scarcely reached. In those hills, when a man dies far from home, his friends tie threads across the streams near his village, in order to provide the spirit with a bridge on his return journey; and I mention this particularly because the custom may throw some light on the well-known inability of Scottish elves and sprites

to cross running water. Among the Khasias also, when a man dies abroad, a cock is killed that the bird may wake the ghost early each day on his travel homeward; and as far as I could make out when I visited the country, the indigenous religion consists almost wholly of the worship of the spirits of the dead. Now the beliefs of the Khasia folk are merely a sample of the ideas universally prevalent, among the aborigines of India, regarding the returning spirit. If again we go among the general settled population of Hindus, we find the same feelings persistent among them. The lament at a Hindu funeral says, "That which has spoken has gone—the Spirit has departed"—and at the same time there runs through their obsequies the notion that the wandering soul of the dead person must be provided with a new refuge, must be harboured, and comforted. As bodily death is a giving up of the ghost, he must be provided with a fresh tenement, or at least with some temporary accommodation; and here comes in the very general custom among certain classes of Hindus, after a cremation, of picking up at the funeral pyre some small object in which the soul is supposed, by a

fiction, to have taken refuge after the body has been burnt, and of carrying it back to the dead man's house.

You will observe that the belief in survival involves the necessity of giving the homeless spirit some local habitation ; he must take up his abode in something animate or inanimate, in a tree, an animal, or perhaps in queer-looking stocks and stones. He is thus likely to be haunting places in some shadowy or substantial form ; he may be helping his friends and plaguing his enemies ; his presence can be discovered by the breaking out of a disease, by an odd accident, or by the strange behaviour of an animal. One remarkable case is worth mentioning to an English audience. Some fifty years ago a very high English official died in a fortress, at a place that is one of the centres of Brahmanic orthodoxy ; and at the moment when the news of his death reached the Sepoy guard at the main gate, a black cat rushed out of it. The guard presented arms to the cat as a salute to the flying spirit of the powerful Englishman ; and the coincidence took so firm a hold of the locality that up to a few years ago neither exhortation nor orders could prevent a Hindu sentry at that gate from presenting

arms to any cat that passed out of the fort at night.

My conjecture is that a great part of what is called Animism—the tendency to discover human life and agency in all moving things, whether waving trees or wandering beasts—begins with this ingrained conviction that some new form or habitation must be provided for the spirits of dead men. I do not pretend that in India the whole worship of trees and animals can be traced to this habit of the mind, but I believe that the widespread idea of possession by spirits or demons, particularly the very common notion that the soul of a wicked or miserable man is inside a wild beast, does come largely from the imaginary necessity of finding lodging and employment for ghosts.

Nothing indeed is more common in India than the belief that the spirits of dead men have passed into certain animals, and I could give some curious instances of the manner in which this passage of the spirit through an animal shape affects the subsequent development of a deity, who often retains in his attributes, symbols, and mythology, the recollection of this earlier stage of his metamorphosis. But this is a side line of my

main subject, and anticipates a later stage of it. I can only say here that in India the worship of animals becomes crossed and intertwined at a very early stage with the worship of spirits, in a manner very difficult to unravel; that there is good evidence that as the ghost developed into a god, he retained some characteristic of the animal whom he may have at one time inhabited, which animal often became in a later stage one of the god's temporary embodiments. A serpent, for example, is unquestionably dreaded, and therefore worshipped as a dangerous and mysterious beast; and for that very reason he may be also treated as the embodiment of a malignant and subtle spirit recently passed away from among men. Later on the sacred snake is regarded as the shape into which some sage or semi-divine person has become transformed. And ultimately it becomes the emblem or allegorical symbol of a great god. I repeat, that at the bottom of all these imaginary changes lies the belief in survival, the notion that death is transmigration, and that man is encompassed by the restless and roving spirits of the dead, who have human wants and affections, and superhuman powers. All these fancies appear to me to become

grouped and interlaced in the word superstition—a word that may have originally meant something like survival—and out of this atmosphere of ghostly terrors, griefs, and wonder the rudimentary deities seem to me to be continually issuing.

It is certain that in India one can distinctly follow the evolution of the ghosts of men, whose life or death has been notorious, into gods. Wherever in India the beliefs can still be found in an elementary or indigenous state, wherever they appear to have grown up spontaneously, some of the principal deities can be identified with the spirits of departed humanity. When I lived for some years in a province of central India that had been very little touched by external influences, I had many opportunities of personally verifying this fact. In the outlying districts one could find everywhere the worship of the spirits of men who had been distinguished for valour, wisdom, piety, or misfortune, for a notable life or a tragic death. Their Manes were propitiated; and if their power to harm or to help increased, their tombs might become shrines or temples; and the offerings to the dead might develop into sacrifices. The report that a god has lived on earth as a man, the

fact that he has been perfectly well-known in the neighbourhood, are no prejudice whatever to his subsequent dignity; though as his wonder-working reputation rises, his earthly history becomes usually more dim and mystical; the legend comes in to disguise his mortal origin, and he veils himself more and more under divine attributes. If we look steadily at these processes, visible in the clear daylight of the present time, they may well seem to reflect, as in a mirror, the fables and mythologies of the antique world, and to throw a ray of light on their origin; while the reality of the thing is brought home to us by the fact that the spirits of more than one Englishman, and of one Englishwoman, are now worshipped in India. General Nicholson, who was killed in the storming of Delhi, had a sect of worshippers; and in south India they adore the spirit of Captain Pole, who was mortally wounded and died in a forest; the people dug his grave, built his shrine, and employed a local priest to devise a form of worship that was certainly going on within the last few years.

But the authentic transformation of the disembodied spirit into a superhuman being is contested by no one; the difficulty is only

to disentangle the ghost, the divine ancestor, and the incipient deity with his attributes or special powers. They seem to be often blended, and their earthly and unearthly characters remain for a certain time inter-fused. We had last year a census of all India; and I noticed in an Indian newspaper of March last that one Hindu householder filled up his schedule by returning, as Head of the Family, his household deity, whose profession he described as subsistence on an endowment, while the question whether the divine personage was or was not literate was somewhat indirectly answered by entering him as Omniscient. At a later stage, when the divinity is once clearly established, his special attributes or department may be determined by an accident. We may take, as an example, the history of Hurdeo Lala, who was, not very long ago, poisoned in central India by his brother through jealousy. This was a sensational murder, not unlike that of Hamlet's father; and whereas in England he might have been commemorated by a tragic drama, a mournful ballad, or by a figure in a wax-work exhibition, in India temples were erected to him. Some time afterward, when the cholera broke out

suddenly and fiercely in a camp that was pitched close to his shrine, it was ascribed by public opinion to the displeasure of his injured ghost, who was thus credited with the power of letting loose epidemics; so Hurdeo Lala became the special god of cholera in that region. It is in this manner that dim shapes and mere superstitious dread gradually give place to the distinct image and definite attributes of divinity.

Thus it seems to me, if I may here briefly recapitulate, that everywhere in India the natural propensity to adore curious, terrible, or beneficent things has become crossed and mixed up with the habit of detecting human spirits everywhere. This leads to the deification of humanity; which is throughout so much the strongest element in the shaping of superstitious imagery that it gradually absorbs all other elements. And thus the detection of divine power or purpose in plants and animals, in stocks and stones, in plagues and diseases, has a tendency to coalesce and harden into the worship of some glorified man, who may have the place as his sanctuary, the plant or animal as his embodiment, or the plague as his attribute. The adoration is paid both to the object, and

to the spirit that has become accidentally connected with the object, and the two lines of worship take human shape eventually.

It is true that the deification of notables does not go on in India in so regular and recognised a fashion as in China, where the gods and their ritual are under State patronage and authority, and where promotions from the lower to the higher grades of the Pantheon are often announced in the Official Gazette. In India, Religion has always been, as I have said, independent of State supervision, and is only imperfectly controlled by the priesthood. The minor Indian spirit is left to rise by his own merit and by popular suffrage; the foreign governments that have so long ruled in India are either hostile or indifferent—and in these latter days the gradual spread of wider knowledge of the outer world, the general stir and movement of civilised and peaceful life, the spread of education, are undermining the whole fabric of these beliefs, and driving them into obscure corners. In the course of one or two generations they will probably dwindle down to the condition of paganism or heathenism; they will be regarded as the quaint, old-fashioned superstitions of the wolds or the remote rural

districts; and thus the embryonic stages of the generation of gods will gradually disappear. The origin of the divine species, the descent of the deities from man, may then come to be vigorously disputed by scholars and antiquarians; the saints and heroes will become fabulous and manifestly unreal, and their true evolution will be explained philosophically, or demonstrated by the science of comparative mythology.

At present, however, the deification of ghosts can be unquestionably established by the collection of plentiful evidence in India. Of course I do not pretend that it covers the whole ground, or that it is more than one of the sources which have produced the confused multitude of deities that are worshipped there. And I am well aware that the genealogy of deities has been traced back to ancestral and spirit worship in various countries. Nevertheless we have never before been able to take such a comprehensive survey of the actual process; and the value of observations taken in India is that it gives us not only the earliest but the latest stages of deification, and shows us the connected series. We have at the bottom the universal worship of spirits partly ancestral and commemorative, in part

propitiatory; we see them gradually transmuted into household gods, local deities and divinities of special forms, attributes, and departments; while at the top we have the full-blown adoration of the lofty Brahmanic deities who preside over the operations of Nature and the strongest passions of mankind.

The verification of such an important phase in the Natural History of polytheism seems to me not the least curious result of that remarkable contact and contrast between ancient and modern ideas and institutions, that is represented by the English in India. To us, whom political circumstances have brought more closely than any other modern nation into relation with archaic beliefs, it is of particular interest that we should find in India a strong corroboration of the theory that was adopted, from a point of view different yet not altogether dissimilar, by those who stood face to face with the decaying polytheism of the Roman empire. It was positively affirmed by the Christian Fathers and apologists that the gods of classic paganism were deified men. Tertullian challenges the heathen to deny it; and Augustine vehemently asserts it. "For with such blindness," he says, "do impious men, as it were stumble

over mountains, and will not see the things which strike their own eyes, that they do not attend to the fact that in all the literature of the pagans there are not found any, or scarcely any, gods who have not been men to whom when dead divine honours were paid".

You will remember that I began by throwing out the conjecture that the original bent or form of Natural Religion had been moulded upon the deep impression stamped on primitive minds by the perpetual death and reappearance, or resuscitation, of animate things. And I argued that the incessant presence of this visible operation, aided by the natural feelings of terror and regret, had generated in the imagination of the earliest races their intense conviction that the death of man is only the transmigration of his soul, that he only suffers a change of shape or abode. I suggested that this had contributed to produce spirit worship generally, and had led to the adoration of the more illustrious spirits, who were invested with superior powers, and became gods. Where now, in the upper grades of Hinduism, may we observe the full growth and maturity of these primordial ideas? We see them, I think, magnified and reproduced upon a

grand and imposing scale, in the supreme divinities of Hindu theology, in Vishnu and Siva; for Brahma, the creative energy, is too remote and abstract an influence for popular worship. Siva represents what I have taken to be the earliest and universal impression of Nature upon men—the impression of endless and pitiless change. He is the destroyer and rebuilder of various forms of life; he has charge of the whole circle of animated creation, the incessant round of birth and death in which all Nature eternally revolves. His attributes are indicated by symbols emblematic of death and of man's desire; he presides over the ebb and flow of sentient existence. In Siva we have the condensation of the two primordial agencies, the striving to live and the forces that kill; and thus, philosophically speaking, we see in this great divinity a comprehensive transfiguration of that idea which, as I repeat, I hold to be the root of Natural Religion. He exhibits by images, emblems, and allegorical carvings the whole course and revolution of Nature, the inexorable law of the alternate triumph of life and death—Mors Janua Vitae—the unending circle of indestructible animation.

Vishnu, on the other hand, impersonates the higher evolution; the upward tendency of the human spirit. He represents several great and far-reaching religious ideas. In the increasing flux and change of all things he is their Preserver; and although he is one of the highest gods he has constantly revisited the earth either in animal or in human shape. What are the modes and ascending flights by which the spirits, who have been deified for their valour, sanctity, or beneficence, are brought into relation with this supreme conception of divinity? They rise by the medium of the Avatárs, the descents or reappearances of Vishnu, who personifies the doctrine of successive divine embodiments, which is one of the most important in Hinduism. Most of the famous saints, heroes, and demigods of poetry and romance, with many of the superior divinities, are recognised as having been the sensible manifestations of Vishnu; their bodies were only the mortal vesture that he assumed for the purpose of interposing decisively at some great emergency, or whenever he condescended to become again an actor in the world's drama. It must be clearly understood that this theory of the divine embodiment is one of the most

essential and effective doctrines of Hinduism; it links together and explains the various phases of the religion, connecting the lower with the higher ideas, and providing them with a common ground or method of reconciliation. It serves to show, for instance, that the sacred animal of a wild tribe is merely the great Brahmanic deity in disguise, or it may prove that the worshippers of some obscure or local hero have been adoring Vishnu unawares. It thus accommodates and absorbs the lower deities ; and while it draws them up to the sky and completes their apotheosis, it also brings the higher gods constantly down again from heaven to take part in human affairs. We thus find running through all Hinduism, first the belief in the migration of spirits when divorced from the body, next their deification, and latterly their identification with the supreme abstract divinities. But these supreme divinities reappear again in various earthly forms ; so that there is a continual passage to and fro between men and gods, gods and men. And thus we have the electric current of all-pervading divine energy completing its circle through diverse forms, until we reach the conception of all Nature being possessed by the divinity.

We are now on the limit of that which I take to be the intellectual climax of the evolution of Natural Religion—I mean the doctrine of Pantheism. The adoration of innumerable spirits becomes gradually collected into the main channels and runs into the anthropomorphic moulds of the higher polytheism, which again is still further condensed into the recognition of the Brahmanic Trinity under multitudinous shapes, signs, and attributes. And as all rivers end in the sea, so every sign, symbol, figure, or active energy of divinity, is ultimately regarded as the outward expression of that single universal divine potency, which is everywhere immanent in the world, which in fact *is* the World.

I must guard myself from being understood to hold that the deification of humanity accounts for all Hinduism; for in India every visible presentation of force, everything that can harm or help mankind, is worshipped; at first instinctively and directly, latterly as the token of divinity working behind the phenomenal veil. We have of course to take into account the direct adoration paid to the mountains and rivers, to the Sun and the Moon, to the Sky and 'Winds, and to such

abstract personifications as the goddess of Fortune. And into the allegorical and mythological branch of this vast subject I cannot here enter.

It is now time for me to turn to another side of Hinduism, to its Ritual, which is in its early stages a vast method of propitiation, and latterly a lofty kind of ceremonial liturgy. My view is that just as the higher polytheism is connected by descent with the aboriginal veneration of disembodied spirits, so likewise much of the ritual can be followed back, in India, to primitive obsequies, to methods for laying the ghost, for feeding, comforting, and conciliating him. Many years ago, on my road home to England, I travelled straight from the depths of central India to Paris, and on the Boulevards I came suddenly to a stand before a fashionable mourning warehouse, which had in large letters on the plate glass the motto, *Le deuil est un culte*—Mourning is Worship. As this was precisely the conclusion that had been suggested to me a month earlier, by the sight of the funeral rites of the Bheels, a wild folk in the jungles, I was startled by finding it proclaimed in Paris as an advertisement of crape and black silk. And I began to consider whether this

might not be the attenuated survival of a remote but once universal idea. For the ceremonies, the honours and attentions paid to the dead, among primitive societies in India, seemed to me intended to please and provide for the ghost; and some trace of this purpose may be discerned in almost every stage or gradation of funeral services among Hindus, from the lowest to the highest, from the offerings made to the dead and the wailing prayers of the rude tribes, up to the formal oblations prescribed by the Brahmanic High Church. You may have heard, for example, that the right to inherit property is by Hindu law co-extensive with the duty of making certain periodical offerings to the ancestral spirits.

I agree, therefore, that mourning in its original meaning partook largely of the nature of worship. I think the prayers were not for the dead man but addressed to him, that the funeral service was usually an offer or an attempt to do him service. And I find reason to believe that whenever a spirit became gradually translated to some higher degree of divinity, the earlier propitiation of the wandering ghost passed into a form of worship, that the offerings at the grave or shrine

became sacrifices in the temple. Now I submit to you the general remark that in no existing religious system does sacrifice play such an important part, occupy such high ground, as in Hinduism. In the ancient world it may be said to have been almost an universal practice, the most essential of all religious observances. In the modern world it has almost entirely disappeared. It lingers in Mahomedanism as a figurative or commemorative act; in Buddhism the offerings are not propitiatory; they are pious gifts reverentially presented, chiefly as alms to the priesthood. But in India we can still see with our eyes the performance of sacrifices in almost every stage or step of an ascending scale; there is every variety of offering; the wild tribes slaughter buffaloes to the goddess Devi; the altars of Siva, in the heart of Calcutta, stream with the blood of goats; and although human sacrifice and self-sacrifice by suicide have now been everywhere suppressed, yet traditional remains of these customs still circulate in the outlying parts of the country. The Brahmans do their best to discourage and refine these savage rites, but as in the matter of the ruder gods so in regard to their ritual, the priesthood has never been

strong enough to purify and regulate all the discordant usages of a most diversified society. It has thus come to pass that some very rough and barbarous rites are practised side by side with the pure and lofty ceremonial of the Vedic devotions. The idol may be the god itself, may be the consecrated image in which the deity is present, or may be merely the token or point for prayer and meditation; and according to the votary's conception of the god so is the intention and meaning of the sacrifice. The lowest conception seems to be that of providing food or service for the ghost, the highest is of a sin offering, or mysterious atonement.

Human sacrifice is one of the earliest forms of the rite. How did it first begin ? Some very ingenious and intricate explanations of its origin have recently been suggested; I myself doubt whether we can go back with any certainty beyond the motive of pleasing or paying due honour to the ghost of some powerful personage. Perhaps the earliest notion to be found now authentically existing, not in India, but upon the Indian borderland, is that of despatching slaves or companions to accompany a dead chief on his journey into the next world—that is, into his new

state of existence or abode. The tribes of our North-East frontier still make occasional raids upon the villages of the plain for the purpose of capturing Bengalees, whom they slay at the funeral of a chief in order to provide him with a retinue. In the case of prisoners taken in war there may also be the desire of finding a plausible, what we might call a sanctimonious, pretext for getting rid of them by slaying them on the altar; for nothing is more common than to find a sacred duty used to veil some motive of direct human interest or utility. However this may be, there is strong evidence connecting human sacrifice in India with funeral obsequies; and the view which I venture to put before you is that by the same process of development which converted the spirit into a deity, the slaying of slaves and captives to attend the departing ghost becomes the offering up of victims to powerful gods. There is no doubt whatever that human sacrifice has been held, is held, in India as elsewhere, to be a sovereign remedy for appeasing the wrath of the gods. Most of us have heard of the Meriah sacrifices among the Khonds, who periodically slaughtered human victims. There is moreover a

well-authenticated case of an English official finding a victim tied up before a shrine during a sharp epidemic of cholera; and there was another mysterious incident not very long ago at a temple in that city which is chiefly given up to the worship of the great god Siva. I may mention, also, that certain unaccountable and apparently motiveless murders, very like those which some years ago frightened London, have occasionally been committed; and were probably due to the accomplishment of a vow made, like Jephtha's, to be fulfilled if a prayer for some great favour were answered.

But systematic human sacrifice, except among a few savage tribes, must have disappeared long ago from India. Such traditions of the custom as remain, point to the idea of resorting to it only on some great emergency or mysterious difficulty indicating divine displeasure. There is one world-wide and inveterate superstition belonging to the sacrificial class, of which we have many vestiges in India—it is the belief that a building can be made strong, can be prevented from falling, by burying alive some one, usually a child, under its foundations.

Grimm, in his "Teutonic Mythology",

gives stories showing the prevalence of this custom in North Europe before the Teutonic tribes were Christianised. And the tradition still overshadows the imagination of primitive folk in India. I recollect that when one of the piers of a railway bridge was washed away by a flood in central India, there was a panic among the tribes of the neighbouring hills, who were possessed by the rumour that one of them was to be seized and buried in the basement when the pier should be rebuilt. The ghost of such a victim becomes naturally deified. On the bastion of many of the forts in that country is a sort of mimic grave or shrine, sacred to a dead man who is said to have been sacrificed long ago to keep up the wall of a fortress, and who has now become the tutelary spirit of bastions. But the Moghul emperor, Shah Jehan, was humane enough to bury goats instead of men under the walls of his fortified palace; and there has probably been a steady transition to milder forms of consecration. We still, in England, bury something, though only a few coins, under a foundation-stone; and without pretending to connect this formula with any ritualistic origin, indicating propitiation for the building's safety, I may say that theories

have been strung together on quite as far-fetched and as fanciful lines of association.

But sacrifice may also be voluntary, upon public or private grounds; and religious suicide has always had much vogue in India. There is a story of the commander of an army, who turned the adverse tide of battle by causing himself to be beheaded in front of his troops as a sacrifice to the gods. And though in military history I have discovered no other instance of a general who won an action by losing his head at a critical moment, yet the legend illustrates the persistence of the central idea that great emergencies demand supreme propitiatory acts. I admit, however, that to the sceptical mind, which discerns under every observance the germ of utilitarian motive, the story may present itself as no more than a pious invention to sanctify the sudden violent removal of an incapable or unlucky leader.

Let me now refer to the highest form of human self-sacrifice, the latest to disappear in some parts of India. I mean the custom of Suttee. In the burning of Hindu widows on the funeral pyre of their husbands, we may perceive two or three motives intertwined; we have, first, the 'primordial idea of

sending a wife to accompany her husband into the next world, secondly, the much later doctrine, that for a widow to die in this manner with her husband is an act of the purest and noblest devotion, and lastly comes in the irrepressible utilitarian motive of liberating a great man's estate from the very serious burden of dowry for several widows. Some years ago a Hindu nobleman, with whom I was acquainted, had to support twelve of his father's widows; and those who have seen in Rajputana, on the marble tombs or cenotaphs of the chiefs, a long row of the figures of the wives and slave girls who were burnt with some great Rajah three or four generations back, might easily appreciate the danger to which the temptation of putting away defenceless women might expose widows in the dark ages of India.

These things were done, however, as Macbeth says, in the olden time, "ere human statute purged the gentle weal"—that is, before Governments were strong enough to support the higher morality of India in suppressing them. The savage forms of sacrifice are now extinct, but the later and milder varieties of immolation and offering exist in great abundance, far greater, as I have said, than in

any other civilised country. The Ritual is the outward and visible sign of natural piety ; for piety, as we are told in a Socratic dialogue, is a sort of science of praying and sacrificing, of asking and giving. This definition, given at Athens more than 2,000 years ago, exactly fits in with the apparent object of the ritual of Indian polytheism. Indeed its whole aspect is to me that of an open market or bazaar, in which these dealings are carried on under every kind of ensign, by every kind of device and method of intercourse, among an infinite number of establishments and profession.

For the characteristics of Natural Religion, the conditions of its existence as we see it in India, are complete liberty and material tolerance ; there is no monopoly either of divine powers or even of sacerdotal privilege ; since the Brahmans, though a most exclusive caste, are not an exclusive priesthood. No deity is invested with a supreme prerogative ; no teacher proclaims himself the sole proprietor of the secret of the divine will ; the army of the gods is not a fixed establishment ; nor has the State ever asserted authority over the public worship. In India the British Government is more absolutely disconnected with the country's religion than in any

other part of His Majesty's dominions; it interposes only when barbarous customs fall within the range of the ordinary penal code; and in fact, the whole art and practice of Hinduism still lies open, as it has always done, to the changing influences of social and political environment.

It is this unrestrained indulgence of the religious propensities, this immemorial immunity from authoritative limitation, that has made India so important a field of study, especially for those who desire to understand the ancient polytheisms. For in the gradual transformations of the divine figures is seen the free and natural working of the radical ideas that seem to have inspired the earliest forms of superstition everywhere, and to have determined their subsequent expansion. As with the gods, so with their ritual; one may see in India the stages and transitions; one may fancy that their pedigree can be identified, may find corroboration of the hypothesis that most of these customs and practices can be traced to a few primary sources.

What does Hobbes, in the "Leviathan," call the Natural Seed of Religion? "And in these Foure Things" (he says), Opinion of

Ghosts, Ignorance of Second Causes, Devotion toward what men fear, and Taking of Things casual for Prognostiques, consisteth the Natural Seed of Religion, which by reason of the different Fancies, Judgments, and Passions of severall men, hath grown up into ceremonies so different that those which are used by one man are for the most part ridiculous to another".

These words, quaint and stiff as they are, appear to me to cover most of the ground out of which polytheism in India has grown up, and, what is more, can be still seen growing. I do not mean that the process of transformation is always upward—I think that the strong tendency of beliefs and customs to improve is counteracted by another tendency toward degradation. I could give examples to show that a pure and exalted religious conception very often suffers decay and corruption, that spiritualism relapses into idolatry. But this is because the upper Hinduism has never been organised authoritatively, has never acquired the concentrated and sustained leverage that enables a powerful Church to lift the lower beliefs permanently up to the higher level. In Europe and western Asia the lesser worships and loose

invertebrate beliefs have been systematically extirpated by Christianity and Islam, whereby the whole religious landscape has been entirely altered. The establishment of Churches and uncompromising Creeds, with the enormous support given to them for centuries by autocratic and orthodox Governments, has laid out the ground of Religion like a stately and well-ordered domain. Even under the Roman empire Religion was largely the concern of the State, the city, or the nation; and in modern Europe the sense of uniformity, discipline, and symmetry in matters of faith and worship, has become deeply impressed on our minds by long habit and the force of law. Popular Hinduism, on the contrary, is left to multitudinous confusion; for it defies limitation, and it is obviously useless to stamp as pure and genuine any particular image or doctrine of divinity, if a great many others may issue and pass current simultaneously. And this state of things seems likely, to judge from the past history of religions, to continue so long as Hinduism remains without any central influence or superior control, but goes on reproducing itself and spreading from the natural seed. In short, the whole panorama of religious ideas and

practices, in polytheistic India, may be compared to the entangled confusion of a primeval forest, where one sees trees of all kinds, ages, and sizes interlacing and contending with each other ; some falling into decay, others shooting up vigorously and overtopping the crowd—while the glimpse of blue sky above the tree tops may symbolise the illimitable transcendental ideas above and apart from the earth-born conceptions.

For it must always be remembered that the dominant idea of intellectual Hinduism, the belief which overhangs all this jungle of superstitions, is the Unity of the Spirit under a plurality of forms. Every religion must be in accord with the common experiences and needs of the people; but if it is to keep its hold on the higher minds it must also rest somewhere upon a philosophic theory; and Pantheism is the Philosophy of Natural Religion. The identity of all divine energies underlying this incessant stir and semblance of life in the world is soon recognised by reflective minds; the highest god as well as the lowest creature is a mere vessel of the Invisible Power; the god is only a peculiar and extraordinary manifestation of that power; the mysterious allegorical Trinity,

Brahma, Vishnu, Siva, at the summit of Hinduism suggests and personifies its regular unchanging operation. It is of little use for those who attack Hinduism to insist that the mythology is a romance, or a disease of language; that the divinities are phantasms, that the idols are merely carved stones or cunning casts of clay. The higher Brahmans would probably agree that the popular polytheism is not much more than a symbolical representation in visible forms of the divine power that is everywhere immanent in Nature, and indeed identical with it. They might say that the anthropomorphic divinities are expressions of the various inscrutable powers that affect mankind; and that Infinite Unity cannot possibly be brought into relation with human affairs; but that no religion can flourish which does not concern itself or conform with the ordinary needs and circumstances of the world we live in. In this world of sensation the soul is locked up as in a prison; nor can it escape by the worship of gods, or by the help of any philosophy that relies upon experience. The only sure way of liberation is not by ascending an illimitable staircase which is always within the phenomenal circuit, but by purification of the soul

from the illusion of the senses: until the whole fabric melts away like a vision, and the soul, being emancipated, attains to clear intellectual apprehension of divine knowledge.

In the meantime Pantheism is not an abstruse theologic doctrine; it is ingrained in the minds of all thoughtful persons; the inner meaning lies everywhere close below the outward worship, and it comes out at the first serious question. Queer idols and grotesque rites are to be seen everywhere in India, yet if any one were to challenge the priest or the worshipper to justify or explain them, he might very possibly receive an answer that would startle him by its subtlety, and by the momentary disclosure of some profound meaning underlying the irrational and superficial observance. And so Pantheism may be regarded as the final stage in the fusion and combination of the multitude of forms and conceptions bred out of vagrant superstitions; it does not stamp out or abolish them; it hardly cares to improve them; it explains and finds room for them all.

Thus forms and ceremonies, prayer and sacrifice, are useful only within the limits of this visible world, which is for gods as well as for men the sphere of action and concern.

The highest devotion of Hinduism has for its object spiritual knowledge, the rescue of the soul from the ocean of illusory ephemeral existence; and this liberation is attained by the soul's passage through the vicissitudes of innumerable lives. Even here it is possible, I believe, to discern the remote influence of the persistent analogy from Nature; for there is no extravagance in supposing that the great Hindu dogma of the transmigration of souls still prolongs metaphysically the rule of change and transition by which the whole apparent universe is, to the Indian, so manifestly governed. The material conception of the homeless, wandering ghost, whom death is constantly dislodging, who may become a god, and again become a man, reappears in the moral doctrine of the laborious travel of the soul through many forms, through a labyrinth of painful and purifying existences; it is the promulgation of Natural law in the Spiritual world. According to this doctrine every human being has suffered a long series of births and dissolutions, his present condition being the necessary consequence of his precedent doings or experiences. And the range of his diverse existences stretches from a vegeta-

ble to a divinity; for gods also are subject to the law which governs the world of sensation. The same soul that moved in the flower may reappear in the god; and we can here perceive that this doctrine mysteriously points to or shadows out the inner meaning of the connection or common basis that underlies and holds together the lower and higher forms of external worship.

Every successive death does indeed interrupt consciousness; but so does sleep; and as in the visible world our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting, while we nevertheless inherit the qualities, good or bad, of our progenitors; so between each stage of its journey the soul loses all remembrance of the past, yet its next life is influenced by the merits or demerits accumulated in previous states. I venture to suggest that the upward striving of Nature through the modifications of forms and species is reflected, as in a glass, darkly, by this vision of spiritual evolution that gradually liberates the soul from the bondage of conscious existence, that purges it from the periodical returns of life's fitful fever, and brings it to final release by absorption into the one Essence. Then at last it is seen that all the changes of mortal life are merely

illusions of the sense; that as Lady Macbeth has said, the sleeping and the dead are but as pictures; and that this manifold working of Nature is but a kind of embroidery on the curtain which hangs before the illumination of true spiritual knowledge.

"And as", says one of their text-books, "by spreading out a picture, all its figures are rendered plainly visible, so the apparent existence of the world is due to Māya—that is to say Illusion. With the destruction of this Illusion by knowledge phenomena are reduced to Unreality—just as the figures in the picture disappear when the canvas is rolled up."

I have thus endeavoured to give some general outline and measure of the vast difference in religious ideas and observances that separates the lower from the higher beliefs in India. It is the difference between the primitive beliefs in survival and constant re-embodiment of the human ghost, and the philosophical notion of the soul's passage through a cycle of existences until it is absorbed into Spiritual Being. It is the difference between the superstition that every moving thing or wandering animal is possessed by a peculiar spirit, and the discovery that all nature is imbued by one divine energy. From

the feeling that a god is phenomenally everywhere, the train of thought advances to the conviction that God is phenomenally nowhere, to the idealism that regards the whole world as a subjective creation of one's own illusive fancy. Although these differences are extreme and cover from point to point the whole range of natural theology, yet they are not treated in Hinduism as mutually hostile or inconsistent; the higher ideas and observances tolerate, adopt, and interpret the lower; the worshipper at an ordinary temple, a man who adores a shapeless image, may, probably does, hold the highest Unitarian doctrines. His mind finds no difficulty in reconciling shifting multiformity at the base of his religion, with changeless Unity at the summit. No one, certainly not I, can pretend to give a clear demonstration of the whole line of connection, or to follow the process of imagination and thought which lead from the belief in millions of gods to the recognition of one Universal Spirit, or to the final conclusion that He is Unknowable. I can only say that the impression produced upon myself, after long personal observation of Religion in India, is that the whole of this marvellous structure comes by what, for want of a better term, I must call natural growth.

## GAUTAMA THE BUDDHA

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This lectureship has celebrated in the past many eminent names in the history of art and science, philosophy and literature, but they all belonged to the Western world. In Gautama the Buddha we have a master mind from the East second to none so far as the influence on the thought and life of the human race is concerned, and sacred to all as the founder of a religious tradition whose hold is hardly less wide and deep than any other. He belongs to the history of the world's thought, to the general inheritance of all cultivated men; for, judged by intellectual integrity, moral earnestness, and spiritual insight, he is undoubtedly one of the greatest figures in history.

### I

Though his historical character has been called in question, there are few competent scholars, if any, at the present day who doubt

that he was an historical person whose date can be fixed, whose life can be sketched at least in outline, and whose teachings on some of the essential problems of the philosophy of religion can be learnt with reasonable certainty. I cannot here enter into a detailed justification for holding that certain parts of the early canonical literature contain the recollections of those who had seen and heard the master. It was a world in which writing was not much in use; so memories were more accurate and tenacious than is usual now. This is evident from the fact that a document of a much earlier date, the *Rg Veda*, has come down to us, preserved in men's memories, with fewer variant readings than many texts of later ages. Though the Buddhist documents have undergone a good deal of editing in later times, the memorable sayings and deeds of the founder can be learnt with moderate accuracy. The ornate supernatural elements and unhistorical narratives such as those about the marvels attending the birth of Gautama represent the reactions to his personality of his early followers who were more devoted than discerning. There is, however, fundamental agreement between the Pāli Canon, the Ceylon Chronicles, and

the Sanskrit works about the important events of his life, the picture of the world in which he moved, and the earliest form of his teaching. The stories of his childhood and youth have undoubtedly a mythical air, but there is no reason to distrust the traditional accounts of his lineage. He was born in the year 563 B. C., the son of Suddhōdana of the Kṣatriya clan known as sākyā, of Kapilavastu, on the Nepalese border one hundred miles north of Benares. The spot was afterwards marked by the emperor Asoka with a column which is still standing. His own name is Siddhāttha, Gautama being his family name. The priests who were present at his birth said that he would be an emperor (*Cakravartin*), if he would consent to reign; he would become a Buddha, if he adopted the life of a wandering ascetic. Evidently the same individual could not be both an emperor and a Buddha, for renunciation of worldly career was regarded as an indispensable preliminary for serious religion. We learn from the *Sutta Nipata* the story of an aged seer named Asita who came to see the child, and more or less in the manner of Simeon prophesied the future greatness of the child and wept at the thought that he himself would not live

to 'see it and hear the new gospel. The mother died seven days after the birth of the child, and her sister Mahāprajāpati, Suddhodana's second wife, brought up the baby. In due course Gautama married his cousin Yasodharā and had a son Rāhula. The story that Gautama's father was particular that his son should be spared depressing experiences and that chance or the will of the gods set in his path an old man broken and decrepit, a sick man, a dead man, and a wandering ascetic, which last inspired him with the desire to seek in the religious life peace and serenity, indicates that Gautama was of a religious temperament and found the pleasures and ambitions of the world unsatisfying. The ideal of the mendicant life attracted him and we hear frequently in his discourses of the 'highest goal of the holy life for the sake of which clansmen leave their homes and go forth into homelessness'.<sup>1</sup> The efforts of his father to turn his mind to secular interests failed, and at the age of twenty-nine he left his home, put on the ascetic's garb, and started his career.

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. the *Brhadaranyaka Upanisad*: 'Knowing him, the atman, the Brahmins relinquish the desire for posterity, the desire for possessions, the desire for worldly prosperity and go forth as mendicants'. (iii. 5)

as a wandering seeker of truth. This was the great renunciation.<sup>1</sup> It is difficult for us in this secular age to realize the obsession of religion for the Indian mind and the ardours and agonies which it was willing to face for gaining the religious end. Gautama's search led him to become the disciple of the Brāhmaṇ ascetics Alāra Kālāma and Uddaka Rāmaputta, who instructed him in their own doctrine (*dharma*) and discipline (*vinaya*.) He possibly learnt from them the need for belief, good conduct, and the practice of meditation, though the content of their teaching seemed to him unsound. The cure for the sorrows of the world was not to be found in the endless logomachies of the speculative thinkers. Determined to attain illumination by the practice of asceticism, he withdrew with five disciples to Uruvelā, 'a pleasant spot and a beautiful forest', soothing to the senses and stimulating to the mind. It is a general assumption in India that a holy life is led most easily in peaceful and beautiful landscapes which give the sense of repose and inspiration. Her temples and monasteries are on the banks of rivers or tops of hills and her emphasis on piety never made

<sup>1</sup> In the later legend his separation from his wife becomes the theme of an affecting tale.

he<sup>r</sup> forget the importance of scenery and climate for the effort of religion.

In this beautiful site Gautama chose to devote himself to the severest forms of asceticism. Just as fire cannot be produced by friction from damp wood but only from dry wood, seekers, he thought, whose passions are not calmed cannot attain enlightenment. He accordingly started a series of severe fasts, practised exercises of meditation, and inflicted on himself terrible austerities. Weakness of body brought lassitude of spirit. Though often during this period he found himself at death's door, he got no glimpse into the riddle of life. He therefore decided that asceticism was not the way to enlightenment and tried to think out another way to it. He remembered how once in his youth he had an experience of mystic contemplation, and now tried to pursue that line. Legend tells us that at this crisis Gautama was assailed by Māra, the tempter, who sought in vain, by all manner of terrors and temptations to shake him from his purpose. They indicate that his inner life was not undisturbed and continuous, and it was with a mental struggle that he broke away from old beliefs to try new methods. He persisted in his meditations and passed through the four

stages of contemplation culminating in pure self-possession and equanimity. He saw the whole universe as a system of law, composed of striving creatures, happy or unhappy, noble or mean, continually passing away from one form of existence and taking shape in another. In the last watch of the night 'ignorance was destroyed, knowledge had arisen . . . as I sat there, earnest, strenuous, resolute'. Gautama had attained *bodhi* or illumination and became the Buddha, the enlightened one.<sup>1</sup>

While Buddha was hesitating whether he should attempt to proclaim his teaching, the Scriptures say that the deity Brahma b[ea]t sought him to preach the truth. This means, perhaps, that as he was debating within himself as to what he should do, he received warning somewhat similar to that delivered by the demon of Socrates against withdrawal from life. He resolves 'the doors of immortality are open. Let them that have ears to hear show faith', and starts on his ministry. He not merely preached, which is easy, but lived the kind of life which he taught men should live. He adopted a mendicant mission-

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<sup>1</sup> The name 'Buddha' is a title like Christ or Messiah: only, it is not confined to one individual. On the site in Bodhgaya, where Gautama is said to have attained enlightenment, stands the Mahabodhi temple.

ary's life with all its dangers of poverty, unpopularity, and opposition. He converts in the first place the five disciples who had borne him company in the years of his asceticism, and in the deer park, 'where ascetics were allowed to dwell and animals might not be killed', at the modern Sārnath he preached his first sermon. Disciples began to flock to him. At the end of three months there were sixty, including the beloved Ānanda, the companion of all his wanderings. He said to them one day: 'Go now and wander for the gain of many, for the welfare of many, out of compassion for the world, for the good, for the gain and for the welfare of gods and men. Let not two of you go the same way. Preach the doctrine which is glorious in the beginning, glorious in the middle and glorious in the end, in the spirit and in the letter: proclaim a consummate, perfect and pure life of holiness.' Buddha himself travelled far and wide for forty-five years and gathered many followers. Brāhmins and monks, hermits and outcasts, noble ladies and repentant sinners joined the community. Much of Buddha's activity was concerned with the instruction of his disciples and organization of the order. In our times, Buddha would be

taken for an intellectual. When we read his discourses, we are impressed by his spirit of reason. His ethical path has for its first step right views, a rational outlook. He endeavours to brush aside all cobwebs that interfere with mankind's vision of itself and its destiny. He questions his hearers who appear full of wisdom, though really without it, challenges them to relate their empty words of vague piety to facts. It was a period when many professed to have direct knowledge of God and tell us with assurance not only whether he is or is not but also what he thinks, wills, and does. Buddha convicts many of them of putting on spiritual airs. In the *Tevijja Sutta* Buddha declares that the teachers who talk about Brahmā have not seen him face to face. They are like a man in love who cannot say who the lady is, or like one who builds a staircase without knowing where the place is to be, or like one wishing to cross a river who should call the other side to come to him. Many of us have the religious sense and disposition but are not clear as to the object to which this sense is directed. Devotion, to be reasonable, must be founded on truth. Buddha explains to them the significance of *brahmavihara*, or dwelling with

Brahmā, as a certain kind of meditation, a state of mind where love utterly free from hatred and malice obtains for all. It is not, of course, *nirvana*, to which the eightfold path is the means.

In view of the variety of counsel, he advised his disciples to test by logic and life the different programmes submitted to them and not to accept anything out of regard for their authors. He did not make an exception of himself. He says: 'Accept not what you hear by report, accept not tradition: do not hastily conclude that "it must be so". Do not accept a statement on the ground that it is found in our books, nor on the supposition that "this is acceptable" nor because it is the saying of your teacher.' With a touching solicitude he begs his followers not to be hampered in their thought by the prestige of his name. 'Such faith have I, Lord,' said Sāriputta, 'that methinks there never has been nor will be nor is now any other greater or wiser than the blessed one.' 'Of course, Sāriputta,' is the reply, 'you have known all the Buddhas of the past?' 'No, Lord' 'Well then you know those of the future?' 'No, Lord.' 'Then, at least you know me and have penetrated my mind thoroughly?' 'Not even that, Lord'

'Then why, Sāriputta, are your words "so grand and bold?" There is nothing esoteric about his teaching. He speaks with scorn of those who profess to have secret truths. 'O disciples, there are three to whom secrecy belongs and not openness. Who are they? Secrecy belongs to woman, not openness; secrecy belongs to priestly wisdom, not openness; secrecy belongs to false doctrine, not openness. . . . The doctrines and the rules proclaimed by the perfect Buddha shine before all the world and not in secret.' Speaking to his disciple Ānanda shortly before his death, Buddha says: 'I have preached the truth without making any distinction between exoteric and esoteric doctrine; for in respect of the truths Ānanda, the Tathāgata has no such thing as the closed fist of a teacher who keeps some things back.' In many of his discourses Buddha is represented as arguing with his interlocutors in a more or less Socratic manner, and persuading them insensibly to accept positions different from those from which they started. He would not let his adherents refuse the burden of spiritual liberty. They must not abandon the search for truth by accepting an authority. They must be free men able to be a light and a help to them-

selves. He continues: 'Be ye as those who have the self as their light. Be ye as those who have the self as their refuge. Betake yourselves to no external refuge. Hold fast to the truth as to a refuge.' The highest seat of authority is the voice of the spirit in us. There is little of what we call dogma in Buddha's teaching. With a breadth of view rare in that age and not common in ours he refuses to stifle criticism. Intolerance seemed to him the greatest enemy of religion. Once he entered a public hall at Ambalatthika and found some of his disciples talking of a Brāhmin who had just been accusing Gautama of impiety and finding fault with the order of mendicants he had founded. 'Brethren,' said Gautama, 'if others speak against me, or against my religion or against the Order, there is no reason why you should be angry, discontented or displeased with them. If you are so, you will not only bring yourselves into danger of spiritual loss, but you will not be able to judge whether what they say is correct or not correct'—a most enlightened sentiment, even after 2,500 years of energetic enlightenment. Doctrines are not more or less true simply because they happen to flatter or

wound our prejudices: There was no paradox however strange, no heresy however extreme, that Buddha was unwilling or afraid to consider. He was sure that the only way to meet the confusion and extravagance of the age was by patient sifting of opinions and by helping men to rebuild their lives on a foundation of reason. He denounced unfair criticism of other creeds. ‘It is,’ he said, ‘as a man who looks up and spits at heaven ; the spittle does not soil the heaven, but comes back and defiles his own person.’

There was never an occasion when Buddha flamed forth in anger, never an incident when an unkind word escaped his lips. He had vast tolerance for his kind. Buddha thought of the world as ignorant rather than wicked, as unsatisfactory rather than rebellious. He meets opposition with calm and confidence. There is no nervous irritability or fierce anger about him. His conduct is the perfect expression of courtesy and good feeling with a spice of irony in it. On one of his rounds he was repulsed by a householder with bitter words of abuse. Buddha replied: ‘Friend, if a householder sets food before a beggar, but the beggar refuses to accept the food, to whom does the food then belong?’ The man replied,

'Why, to the householder of course.' Buddha said: 'Then, if I refuse to accept your abuse and ill will, it returns to you, does it not? But I must go away the poorer because I have lost a friend.' Conversion by compulsion was unknown to him. Practice, not belief, is the foundation of his system. He wished to create a temper and a habit. We are unhappy because of our foolish desires. To make ourselves happy all that is necessary is to make ourselves a new heart and see with new eyes. If we suppress evil thoughts and cultivate good ones a bad unhappy mind can be made into a good happy one. Buddha is not concerned with changes of creed. He sits by the sacred fire of a Brāhmin and gives a discourse on his views without denouncing his worship. When Siha the Jain becomes a Buddhist he is required to give food and gifts as before to the Jain monks who frequent his house. With a singular gentleness he presents his views and leaves the rest to the persuasive power of truth.

The great hero of moral achievement is frequently called upon to decide trivial matters of monastic discipline. To found an organisation is to come to terms with the world and concede to social' needs'. It is to provide a

refuge for those who are not quite at home in the ordinary life of society. There were troubles within the Order. Buddha's cousin Devadatta wished to supersede him as the head of the Order and plotted against him, but he was forgiven. On one occasion Buddha found a monk suffering from dysentery and lying in filth. He washed him and changed his bed with the help of his companion Ānanda and said to his disciples : 'Whoever, O monks, would nurse me would nurse the sick man.' There were no distinctions of caste in the Buddhist Order. 'Just as, O monks, the great rivers such as the Ganges, the Yamunā, Aciravatī, Sarabhū, and Māhī when they fall into the ocean lose their former name and clans and are known as the ocean, even so do the four castes of Kṣatriyas, Brāhmins, Vaiśyas, and Sūdras, when they have gone forth in the Doctrine and Discipline taught by the Tathāgata from a home to a homeless life lose their former names and clans (*namagotra*) and are known as ascetics.' In his time women were not secluded in India, and he declared that they were quite capable of attaining sanctity and holiness. In the last year of his life he dined with the courtesan Ambapālī. But he had

considerable hesitation in admitting women to the Order. ‘How, Lord, are we to conduct ourselves with regard to womankind?’ ‘Don’t see them, Ānanda.’ ‘But if we see them, what are we to do?’ ‘Abstain from speech.’ ‘But if they should speak to us, what are we to do?’ ‘Keep wide awake.’ Ānanda was quite chivalrous, pleaded the cause of women for admission into the Order, and won the consent of Buddha. It was the right course but perhaps not quite expedient. ‘If Ananda, women had not received permission to enter the Order, the pure religion would have lasted long, the good law would have stood fast a thousand years. But since they have received that permission, it will now stand fast for only five hundred years.’ For a woman entry into the religious Order required the assent of the relatives while man was at least in theory at his own disposal. But the rules of the Order were by no means final. Buddha says: ‘When I am gone, let the Order if it should so wish, abolish all the lesser and minor precepts.’

The story of his death is told with great pathos and simplicity in the *Mahaparinibbana Sutta*. Buddha was now eighty years old, worn out with toil and travel. At a village

near the little town of Kusinagara, about 120 miles north-east of Benares, in 483 B. C., he passed away. The quiet end of Buddha contrasts vividly with the martyr's deaths of Socrates and Jesus. All the three undermined, in different degrees, the orthodoxies of their time. As a matter of fact, Buddha was more definitely opposed to Vedic orthodoxy and ceremonialism than was Socrates to the State religion of Athens, or Jesus to Judaism, and yet he lived till eighty, gathered a large number of disciples, and founded a religious Order in his own lifetime. Perhaps the Indian temper of religion is responsible for the difference in the treatment of unorthodoxies.

The text of his first sermon has come down to us.<sup>1</sup> There is no reason to doubt that it contains the words and the ideas of the Buddha. Its teaching is quite simple. After observing that those who wish to lead a religious life should avoid the two extremes of self-indulgence and self-mortification and follow the middle way, he enunciates the four

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<sup>1</sup> An examination of the Pali Canon justifies us in regarding as originating with the Buddha himself the Benares sermon on the four noble truths and the eightfold path, some of the speeches in the *Mahaparinibbana Sutta*, some of the verses and short utterances handed down as the 'words of the Buddha' in the *Dhammapada*, *Udana*, and *Itivuttaka*, which are found in more or less the same form in the Sanskrit texts of Nepal and in Tibetan and Chinese translations.

truths about sorrow, the cause of sorrow, the removal of sorrow, and the way leading to it.

1. 'Birth is sorrow. Decay is sorrow. Sickness is sorrow. Death is sorrow. . . . To be conjoined to things which we dislike, to be separated from things which we like,—that also is sorrow. Not to get what one wants,—that too is sorrow.' Birth and death, suffering and love are universal facts. They are the signs of a lack of harmony, of a state of discord. Conflict is at the root of man's misery, of his spiritual disease. It is a pervasive feature of all empirical existence, which is impermanent and transitory; and escape from it can, and must, be found.

2. Everything has a cause and produces an effect. This simple principle governs the whole universe, gods and men, heaven and earth. It is applicable not only to this vast universe stretching through boundless space, with its dazzling world systems and endless series of alternations of growth and decay but also to the events of human life and affairs of history. If we can detect and eliminate the cause of suffering, suffering itself will disappear. The cause of it is *tanha* (Sanskrit *trsna*), craving for existence. This truth is later elaborated in the chain of causation with

twelve links.<sup>1</sup> Ignorance and craving are bound together as the theoretical and practical sides of one phenomenon. The rise of ignorance marks a rupture with life, a violation of its organic integrity. It shows itself in an exaggerated individualism, self-isolation, and rebellion against the harmony of the world. Cravings and desires arise, tormenting the soul which they bind in chains and reducing it to a servitude from which it would fain escape. Ignorance is destroyed by intuition, desire by ethical striving.<sup>2</sup>

Freedom from prejudice is a relative term and even Buddha cannot lay claim to it in any absolute sense. He accepts as axiomatic *karma* and rebirth. As a man acts so shall he be. We are for ever making our own moral world for good or ill. Every thought, feeling, and volition counts for something in

<sup>1</sup> 'By reason of ignorance dispositions ; by reason of disposition-consciousness ; by reason of consciousness name and form ; by reason of name and form contact ; by reason of contact feeling ; by reason of feeling craving ; by reason of craving grasping ; by reason of grasping becoming ; by reason of becoming birth ; by reason of birth old age, death, grief, mourning, pain sorrow and despair.' The sequence of the chain varies in different texts.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. 'When the desires (*kama*) that are in his heart cease then at once the mortal becomes immortal and obtains here in this world Brahman.'

(*Katha Up.* iv. 10) Cf. *Dhammapada* (251): 'There is no fire like desire, there is no monster like hatred, there is no snare like folly; there is no torrent like covetousness.'

our personal development. Mankind is for ever fashioning itself. The thoughts and acts of a remote and invisible past have actually produced the contents of our earth. Buddha sees life as beneath the sovereignty of infinite righteousness. We can never escape the consequences of our deeds. Suffering of every kind, disease and loss, failure and disappointment, the wounds of affection and the frustration of purpose are all charged with moral significance and determined by the principle of moral causation. That there is a retribution on selfishness and reward of inward peace for unselfish life, that we will be made to realize what we have done and in the expressive language of Ezekiel 'loathe ourselves for our iniquities' is Buddha's deepest conviction. He says: 'My action is my possession: my action is my inheritance: my action is the matrix which bears me: my action is the race to which I belong: my action is my refuge.' The rule of law has a redeeming feature in that it removes ghastly visions of eternal hell. No place of doom can last for ever. Heaven and hell belong to the order of the finite and the impermanent. However intense and long they may be, they have an end, and how and when they end depend on

ourselves. Every baser impulse turned into sweetness, every meaner motive mastered, every humbling weakness overcome counts in this effort. We should not, however, think that we need not be concerned with poverty or suffering on the assumption that people get only what they deserve and have brought on themselves. If any one feels like that, if his nature has become opaque to the high brotherhood of all living creation, the law will deal with him sternly, for he has refused to become its agent for mercy and forgiveness. The working of the law is not due to the interference of any personal deity. Bewildering shadows of divine injustice and arbitrary caprice are ruled out.

The human person is a compound of body (*rupa*), with its powers of movement and its organs of sense, of feelings (*vedana*), of perception (*samjna*), of sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch by which he is in commerce with the external world; dispositions (*samskara*) which include aptitudes, abilities, resulting from the past, providing an inheritance for good or ill from previous lives, and constituting a stock of character with which to start at a fresh birth; and summing them all up was thought (*vijnana*) covering the whole

group of mental activities from the most concrete ideation to the most abstract meditation. The inner life of a person is only a succession of thoughts, desires, affections, and passions, and when the corporeal bond which holds them together falls away at death, the unseen potencies beget a new person, psychologically if not physically continuous with the deceased, to suffer or enjoy what his predecessor had prepared for him by his behaviour. The elements which constitute the empirical individual are always changing, but they can never be totally dispersed until the power that holds them together and impels them to rebirth, the craving, the desire for separate existence is extinguished.

If there is no permanent self, then who is affected by the works which the not-self has performed? Buddha answers, 'Shall one who is under the dominion of desire think to go beyond the mind of the master?' In the early texts there is no explanation of this difficulty. There is only an assertion of psychical continuity.<sup>1</sup> He who understands the nature of

<sup>1</sup> In the *Mahanidana Sutta* there is a reference to the 'descent' of the consciousness into the womb of the mother preparatory to rebirth.

Continuity of consciousness between the old and the new lives is asserted and the commentators differ in regard to the question of a corporeal accompaniment of the consciousness. *Buddha-ghosa*, for example, denies that the consciousness is accompanied by a physical form.

the soul and its successive lives cannot regard any single life as of great importance in itself though its consequences for the future may be momentous.

3. For the removal of ignorance a strict morality is essential. *Sila* and *prajna*, good conduct and intuitive insight, are inseparably united. Buddha does not speak of codes and conventions, laws, and rites. The way to be happy is to have a good heart and mind which will show itself in good deeds. Simple goodness in spirit and deed is the basis of his religion. Buddha detaches the perfect life from all connexion with a deity or outside forces and teaches man that the best and worst that can happen to him lie within his own power. We frequently hear him say, 'Come, disciples, lead a holy life for the extinction of sorrow.' The noble eightfold path represents a ladder of perfection. The first step is right views, knowledge of the four truths, which is not to be confused with the gnosis, *jnana* of the Upaniṣads or the faith of the theists. But so long as the truths are known only in the intellect they have no life. They must be discovered and proved by every man in the depths of his own being. The first step is an awakening, a summons to abandon

a way by which we miss our truth and destiny. It is not a casual change of opinion but a radical adjustment of nature which affects the very depths of the soul and leads to the second step of right aspirations towards renunciation, benevolence, and kindness.<sup>1</sup> It is to resolve to renounce pleasures, to bear no malice, and do no harm. Right speech requires us to abstain from lying, slander, abuse, harsh words, and idle talk. Right action is to abstain from taking life, or what is not given, or from carnal excesses. Right living is to abstain from any of the forbidden modes of living; which are those of a caravan-trader, slave-dealer, butcher, publican, or poison-seller. Buddha forbade his monks to ever become soldiers. The eightfold path is more than a code of morality. It is a way of life. Right effort consists in suppressing the rising of evil states, in eradicating those which have arisen, in stimulating good states and perfecting those which have come into being. It is the beginning of mental cultivation. The habit of self-

<sup>1</sup> *Digh.* i. 124. In *Majjhima*, 41 Buddha says that the strong aspiration of a good man takes effect 'if he should wish, after the destruction of the cardinal vices, to realise by his own transcendent knowledge in this present world to be initiated into, and abide in the viceless deliverance of heart and intellect, it will come to pass'. Cf. *James*, v. 16: 'The supplication of a righteous man availeth much in its working.' It is not the answer of God to a petition but the response of cosmic law in early Buddhism.

observation is an effective way to deal with the underworld of the human mind, to root out evil desires and cravings, to maintain an equilibrium between the conscious mind and the other part of our equipment, the complicated psychic and physical apparatus. Man is false and deceitful not merely in relation to others but to himself as well. We adopt ideas not always out of pure and disinterested motives but through some kind of resentment or failure in life. We become vindictive and tyrannical because our pride has been wounded or our love has been unrequited or because we have had some humiliating physical deformity. The remarkable thing about man is that he often deceives himself. Many of us are machines most of the time. Our thoughts and feelings follow an habitual pattern. Through self-examination we attempt to break up automatisms, destroy the reliance of the mind on habitual props and discover the self. Sloth and torpor are as harmful to spiritual progress as evil desires. Rightmindfulness is to look on the body and the spirit in such a way as to remain self-possessed and mindful, overcoming both hankering and dejection. It is self-mastery by means of self-knowledge which allows

nothing to be done mechanically or heedlessly. It is to see things under the aspect of eternity. Right contemplation takes the form of the four meditations. There is a curious impression that Buddha's prescription for good life is the cessation of activity, desiring little and doing nothing. The resolve to win the saving truth, the efforts needful for its attainment, the lives spent in the practice of virtue, the unrelaxing tension of will maintained through constant temptation to aim at less than the highest, all rest on the certitude that the human will is capable of heroic endeavour and achievement. Meditation is an act of attention, an effort of will. It is not passive reverie but intense striving, concentration of mind in which will and thought become fused. According to Buddha's teaching each man will have to find salvation, in the last resort, alone and with his own will, and he needs all the will in the world for so formidable an effort. The general impression that the mystic experience is granted and not achieved is far from correct, except in the sense that all great moments of experience are in a measure given. The mystic is not so much passive as receptive. His life is one of strenuous discipline. Right contemplation

is the end and the crown of the eight-fold path. When the mind and the senses are no longer active, when discursive thought ceases, we get the highest and purest state of the soul when it enjoys the untrammelled bliss of its own nature. It is the substance of the highest life when ignorance and craving become extinct and insight and holiness take their place. It is peaceful contemplation and ecstatic rapture wrought by the mind for itself. It is the true and healthy life of the soul, in which we have a foretaste of a higher existence compared with which our ordinary life is sick and ailing. We have in it a sense of freedom, of knowledge, immediate and unbounded.

Buddha gives a workable system for monks and lay people. In the discourse to the Brâhmin Kûtadanta he lays down five moral rules binding on all lay people, which are: refraining from killing, from taking what is not given, from wrongful indulgence in the passions, from lying, and from intoxicants. It is not abstention from work that Buddha demands. A Jain layman asks Buddha if he teaches the doctrine of in-action, and Buddha replies: 'How might one rightly say of me that the ascetic Gautama holds the principle

of in-action? I proclaim the non-doing of evil conduct of body, speech, and thought. I proclaim the non-doing of various kinds of wicked and evil things. . . . I proclaim the doing of good conduct of the body, speech and thought. I proclaim the doing of various kinds of good things.' In Buddha's scheme of ethics, the spirit of love is more important than good works. 'All good works whatever are not worth one-sixteenth part of love which sets free the heart. Love which sets free the heart comprises them. It shines, gives light and radiance.' 'As a mother, at the risk of her life watches over her only child, so let every one cultivate a boundless love towards all beings.' Respect for animal life is an integral part of morality. A good Buddhist does not kill animals for pleasure or eat flesh. They are his humble brethren and not lower creatures over whom he has dominion by divine right. Serenity of spirit and love for all sentient creation are enjoined by Buddha. He does not speak of sin but only of ignorance and foolishness which could be cured by enlightenment and sympathy.

4. When the individual overcomes ignorance, breaks the power of his own deeds to drag him back into expiation, ceases to desire

and to regret and attains enlightenment, he passes into the world of being as distinct from that of existence, being which is free from form and formlessness, from pain and delight, though that state is not humanly conceivable. It is deliverance, freedom from rebirth, *nirvana*. Buddha refused to explain its nature. The question is unprofitable and perhaps our descriptions of it unmeaning. What it would be like no words could tell, but Buddha shows how it could be reached. He promises the beatific vision in this life to those who adopt his way. He does not mention ceremonial, austerities, gods one or many, or even a worship of himself. He is the discoverer, the teacher of the truth. He concentrates his teaching on the moral discipline and would not enter into metaphysical discussions with the crowd of contemporary sophists. Whether the world was infinite in space or limited, whether it had an origin in time or not, whether the person who had attained truth had or had not individuality, or would or would not live after death, Buddha would not discuss.

Buddha 'has no theories'. He does not claim to have come down to earth with a wisdom which had been his from all eternity.

According to his own account, as the *Jataka* stories relate, he acquired it through innumerable lives of patient effort.<sup>1</sup> He offers his followers a scheme of spiritual development and not a set of doctrines, a way and not a creed. He knew that the acceptance of a creed was generally an excuse for the abandonment of the search. We often refuse to admit facts, not because there is evidence against them, but because there is a theory against them. Buddha's teaching begins with the fact of his enlightenment, a spiritual experience which cannot be put into words. Whatever doctrine there is in Buddha relates to this experience and the way of attaining it. To use an image employed by him our theories of the eternal are as valuable as are those which a chick which has not broken its way through its shell might form of the outside world. To know the truth, we must tread the path.

In this he resembles some of the greatest thinkers of the world. Socrates replied to the charge of 'corrupting the young' that he had no 'doctrine', that Meletus had not produced any evidence, either from his pupils or their

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<sup>1</sup> *Anguttara*, 4. 36, says that Buddha is the redeemed soul who is not subject to any bonds.

relations, to show that they had suffered from his 'doctrine'.<sup>1</sup> Jesus had an abhorrence of dogma. It was not a creed that he taught, or a Church that he established. His aim was to show a new way of life. The cross was the symbol of the new religion, not the creed. Bearing the cross is the condition of discipleship. It stands for a new way of overcoming evil with good, demands a change of outlook, a rejection of instinctive egoisms, and the earthly standards of glory and greatness. St. Paul gives us the 'fruit of the spirit', 'love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance', and contrasts them with 'the works of the flesh', which are 'idolatry, hatred, variance, jealousies, wrath, strife, envyings, murders and such like'.<sup>2</sup> St. Thomas Aquinas experienced in the last year of his life a prolonged ecstasy, as a result of which he refused to write any more, despite the entreaties of his secretary, Reginald. Robert Bridges in the *Testament of Beauty* describes the incident thus:

I am happier in surmizing that his vision at mass  
—in Naples it was when he fell suddenly in trance—  
was some disenthralment of his humanity:  
for thereafter, whether, 'twere Aristotle or Christ  
that had appear'd to him then, he nevermore wrote  
word,

<sup>1</sup> *Apology*, 22.

<sup>2</sup> *Galatians*, v. 22-3, 20-1.

‘neither dictated but laid by inkhorn and pen ;  
 and was as a man out of hearing on that day  
 when Reynaldus, with all the importunity of zeal  
 and intimacy of friendship, would have recall'd him  
 to his incompleted *Summa* : and, sighing, he reply'd  
 'I wil tell the a secret, my son, constraining thee  
 lest thou dare impart it to any man while I liv.  
 My writing is at end. I hav seen such things  
 reveal'd  
 that what I hav written and taught seemeth  
 to me of small worth.  
 And hence I hope in my God, that, as of doctrin  
 ther will be speedily also an end of Life !'

We have now seen with approximate certainty on the strength of the available evidence what the oldest traditions disclose to us of the life and teaching of the Buddha. Though his character and teaching suited admirably his religious world, his elemental simplicity, active love, and personal help in offering to men a way to happiness and escape from sorrow caused his contemporaries and future generations to regard him as a saviour. By refusing to make positive statements on the ultimate problems on the ground that their solutions escape definition, he helped to provoke doctrinal controversies. To satisfy the needs of less strenuous temperaments who had also their rights, varieties

of Buddhism less severe and philosophic developed.

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We find in Buddha, in powerful combination, spiritual profundity and moral strength of the highest order and a discreet intellectual reserve. He is one of those rare spirits who bring to men a realization of their own divinity and makes the spiritual life seem adventurous and attractive, so that they may go forth into the world with a new interest and a new joy at heart. While his great intellect and wisdom gave him the comprehension of the highest truth, his warm heart led him to devote his life to save from sorrow suffering humanity, thus confirming the great mystic tradition that true immortals occupy themselves with human affairs, even though they possess divine souls. The greatness of his personality, his prophetic zeal, and burning love for suffering humanity made a deep impression on those with whom he lived and gave rise to those legends and stories which are the modes of expression available to ordinary humanity when it tries to express true things, the personal superiority of Buddha to the rest of them, and Gautama the apostle of self-control and wisdom and

love becomes the Buddha, the perfectly enlightened, the omniscient one, the saviour of the world. His true greatness stands out clearer and brighter as the ages pass, and even the sceptical-minded are turning to him with a more real appreciation, a deeper reverence and a truer worship. He is one of those few heroes of humanity who have made epochs in the history of our race, with a message for other times as well as their own.

## THE MESSAGE OF THE FOREST

RABINDRANATH TAGORE

## I

We stand before this great world. The truth of our life depends upon our attitude of mind towards it—an attitude which is formed by our habit of dealing with it according to the special circumstance of our surroundings and our temperaments. It guides our attempts to establish relations with the universe either by conquest or by union, either through the cultivation of power or through that of sympathy. And thus in our realisation of the truth of existence, we put our emphasis either upon the principle of dualism or upon the principle of unity.

The Indian sages have held in the Upani-shads that the emancipation of our soul lies in its realising the ultimate truth of unity. They said :

Ishávásyam idam sarvam yat kincha jagatyám jagat.

Téna tyakténa bhunjíthá mē godhah kasyasvit dhanam.

(Know all that moves in this moving world as enveloped by God; and find enjoyment through renunciation, not through greed of possession.)

The meaning of this is, that, when we know the multiplicity of things as the final truth, we try to augment ourselves by the external possession of them; but when we know the Infinite Soul as the final truth, then through our union with it we realise the joy of our soul. Therefore it has been said of those who have attained their fulfilment—“sarvam evá vishanti” (they enter into all things). Their perfect relation with this world is the relation of union.

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This ideal of perfection preached by the forest-dwellers of ancient India runs through the heart of our classical literature and still dominates our mind. The legends related in our epics cluster under the forest shade bearing all through their narrative the message of the forest-dwellers. Our two greatest classical dramas find their background in scenes of the forest hermitage, which are permeated by the association of these sages.

The history of the Northmen of Europe is resonant with the music of the sea. That sea

is not merely topographical in its significance, but represents certain ideals of life which still guide the history and inspire the creations of that race. In the sea, nature presented herself to those men in her aspect of a danger, a barrier which seemed to be at constant war with the land and its children. The sea was the challenge of untamed nature to the indomitable human soul. And man did not flinch; he fought and won, and the spirit of fight continued in him. This fight he still maintains; it is the fight against disease and poverty, tyranny of matter and of man.

This refers to a people who live by the sea, and ride on it as on a wild, champing horse, catching it by its mane and making it render service from shore to shore. They find delight in turning by force the antagonism of circumstances into obedience. Truth appears to them in her aspect of dualism, the perpetual conflict of good and evil, which has no reconciliation, which can only end in victory or defeat.

But in the level tracts of Northern India men found no barrier between their lives and the grand life that permeates the universe. The forest entered into a close living relationship with their work and leisure, with

their daily necessities and contemplations. They could not think of other surroundings as separate or inimical. So the view of the truth, which these men found, did not make manifest the difference, but rather the unity of all things. They uttered their faith in these words: "Yadidam kincha sarvam prâna éjati nihsratam" (All that is vibrates with life, having come out from life). When we know this world as alien to us, then its mechanical aspect takes prominence in our mind; and then we set up our machines and our methods to deal with it and make as much profit as our knowledge of its mechanism allows us to do. This view of things does not play us false, for the machine has its place in this world. And not only this material universe, but human beings also, may be used as machines and made to yield powerful results. This aspect of truth cannot be ignored; it has to be known and mastered. Europe has done so and has reaped a rich harvest.

(The view of this world which India has taken is summed up in one compound Sanskrit word, Sacchidânanda. The meaning is that Reality, which is essentially one, has three phases. The first is Sat; it is the simple fact

that things are, the fact which relates us to all things through the relationship of common existence. The second is Chit; it is the fact that we know, which relates us to all things through the relationship of knowledge. The third is Ananda; it is the fact that we enjoy, which unites us with all things through the relationship of love.)

According to the true Indian view, our consciousness of the world, merely as the sum total of things that exist, and as governed by laws, is imperfect. But it is perfect when our consciousness realises all things as spiritually one with it, and therefore capable of giving us joy. For us the highest purpose of this world is not merely living in it, knowing it and making use of it, but realising our own selves in it through expansion of sympathy; not alienating ourselves from it and dominating it, but comprehending and uniting it with ourselves in perfect union.

## II

When Vikramâditya became king, Ujjayini a great capital, and Kâlidâsa its poet, the ~~age~~ of India's forest retreats had passed. Then we had taken our stand in the midst of the great concourse of humanity. The Chinese and the Hun, the Scythian and the Persian,

the Greek and the Roman, had crowded round us. But, even in that age of pomp and prosperity, the love and reverence with which its poet sang about the hermitage shows what was the dominant ideal that occupied the mind of India; what was the one current of memory that continually flowed through her life.

In Kâlidâsa's drama, *Shakuntala*, the hermitage, which dominates the play, overshadowing the king's palace, has the same idea running through it—the recognition of kinship of man with conscious and unconscious creation alike.

A poet of a later age, while describing a hermitage in his Kâdambari, tells us of the posture of salutation in the flowering lianas as they bow to the wind; of the sacrifice offered by the trees scattering their blossoms; of the grove resounding with the lessons chanted by the neophytes, and the verses repeated by the parrots, learnt by constantly hearing them; of the wild-fowl enjoying “vaishva-deva-bali-pinda” (the food offered to the divinity which is in all creatures); of the ducks coming up from the lake for their portion of the grass seed spread in the cottage yards to dry; and of the deer caressing with

their tongues the young hermit boys. It is again the same story. The hermitage shines out, in all our ancient literature, as the place where the chasm between man and the rest of creation has been bridged.

In the Western dramas, human characters drown our attention in the vortex of their passions. Nature occasionally peeps out, but she is almost always a trespasser, who has to offer excuses, or bow apologetically and depart. But in all our dramas which still retain their fame, such as *Mrit-Shakatika*, *Shakuntala*, *Uttara-Rama-charita*, Nature stands on her own right, proving that she has her great function, to impart the peace of the eternal to human emotions.

The fury of passion in two of Shakespeare's youthful poems is exhibited in conspicuous isolation. It is snatched away, naked, from the context of the All; it has not the green earth or the blue sky around it; it is there ready to bring to our view the raging fever which is in man's desires, and not the balm of health and repose which encircles it in the universe.

*Ritusamhara* is clearly a work of Kâlidâsa's immaturity. The youthful love-song in it does not reach the sublime reticence

which is in *Shakuntala* and *Kumara-Sambhava*. But the tune of these voluptuous outbreaks is set to the varied harmony of Nature's symphony. The moonbeams of the summer evening, resonant with the flow of fountains, acknowledge it as a part of its own melody. In its rhythm sways the Kadamba forest, glistening in the first cool rain of the season; and the south breezes, carrying the scent of the mango blossoms, temper it with their murmur.

In the third canto of *Kumara-Sambhava*, Madana, the God Eros, enters the forest sanctuary to set free a sudden flood of desire amid the serenity of the ascetics' meditation. But the boisterous outbreak of passion so caused was shown against a background of universal life. The divine love-thrills of Sati and Shiva found their response in the world-wide immensity of youth, in which animals and trees have their life-throbs.

Not only its third canto but the whole of the *Kumara-Sambhava* poem is painted upon a limitless canvas. It tells of the eternal wedding of love, its wooing and sacrifice, and its fulfilment, for which the gods wait in suspense. Its inner idea is deep and of all time. It answers the one question that

humanity asks through all its endeavours: "How is the birth of the hero to be brought about, the brave one who can defy and vanquish the evil demon laying waste heaven's own kingdom?"

It becomes evident that such a problem had become acute in Kālidāsa's time; when the old simplicity of Hindu life had broken up. The Hindu kings, forgetful of their duties, had become self-seeking epicureans, and India was being repeatedly devastated by the Scythians. What answer, then, does the poem give to the question it raises? Its message is that the cause of weakness lies in the inner life of the soul. It is in some break of harmony with the Good, some dissociation from the True. In the commencement of the poem we find that the God Shiva, the Good, had remained for long lost in the self-centred solitude of his asceticism, detached from the world of reality. And then Paradise was lost. But *Kumara-Sambhava* is the poem of Paradise Regained. How was it regained? When Sati, the Spirit of Reality, through humiliation, suffering, and penance, won the Heart of Shiva, the Spirit of Goodness. And thus, from the union of the freedom of the real with the restraint of the Good, was born

the heroism that released Paradise from the demon of Lawlessness.

Viewed from without, India, in the time of Kālidāsa, appeared to have reached the zenith of civilisation, excelling as she did in luxury, literature and the arts. But from the poems of Kālidāsa it is evident that this very magnificence of wealth and enjoyment worked against the ideal that sprang and flowed forth from the sacred solitude of the forest. These poems contain the voice of warnings against the gorgeous unreality of that age, which, like a Himālayan avalanche, was slowly gliding down to an abyss of catastrophe. And from his seat beside all the glories of Vikramāditya's throne the poet's heart yearns for the purity and simplicity of India's past age of spiritual striving. And it was this yearning which impelled him to go back to the annals of the ancient Kings of Raghu's line for the narrative poem, in which he traced the history of the rise and fall of the ideal that should guide the rulers of men.

King Dilipa, with Queen Sudakshinā, has entered upon the life of the forest. The great monarch is busy tending the cattle of the hermitage. Thus the poem opens, amid scenes of simplicity and self-denial. But it

ends in the palace of magnificence, in the extravagance of self-enjoyment. With a calm restraint of language the poet tells us of the kingly glory crowned with purity. He begins his poem as the day begins, in the serenity of sunrise. But lavish are the colours in which he describes the end, as of the evening, eloquent for a time with the sumptuous splendour of sunset, but overtaken at last by the devouring darkness which sweeps away all its brilliance into night.

In this beginning and this ending of his poem there lies hidden that message of the forest which found its voice in the poet's words. There runs through the narrative the idea that the future glowed gloriously ahead only when there was in the atmosphere the calm of self-control, of purity and renunciation. When downfall had become imminent, the hungry fires of desire, aflame at a hundred different points, dazzled the eyes of all beholders.

Kâlidâsa in almost all his works represented the unbounden impetuousness of kingly splendour on the one side and the serene strength of regulated desires on the other. Even in the minor drama of *Malavikagni-*

*mitra* we find the same thing in a different manner. It must never be thought that, in this play, the poet's deliberate object was to pander to his royal patron by inviting him to a literary orgy of lust and passion. The very introductory verse indicates the object towards which this play is directed. The poet begins the drama with the prayer, "Sanmârgâlôkayan vyapanayatu sa nastâ-masi vritimishah" (Let God, to illumine for us the path of truth, sweep away our passions, bred of darkness). This is the God Shiva, in whose nature, Pârvati, the eternal Woman, is ever commingled in an ascetic purity of love. The unified being of Shiva and Pârvati is the perfect symbol of the eternal in the wedded love of man and woman. When the poet opens his drama with an invocation of this Spirit of the Divine Union it is evident that it contains in it the message with which he greets his kingly audience. The whole drama goes to show the ugliness of the treachery and cruelty inherent in unchecked self-indulgence. In the play the conflict of ideals is between the King and the Queen, between Agnimitra and 'Dhârini, and the significance of the contrast lies hidden in the very names of the hero and the heroine. Though the

name Agnimitra is historical, yet it symbolises in the poet's mind the destructive force of uncontrolled desire—just as did the name Agnivarna in *Raghuvamsha*. Agnimitra, "the friend of the fire", the reckless person, who in his love-making is playing with fire, not knowing that all the time it is scorching him black. And what a great name is Dhārini, signifying the fortitude and forbearance that comes from majesty of soul! What an association it carries of the infinite dignity of love, purified by self-abnegation that rises far above all insult and baseness of betrayal!

In *Shakuntala* this conflict of ideals has been shown, all through the drama, by the contrast of the pompous heartlessness of the king's court and the natural purity of the forest hermitage. The drama opens with a hunting scene, where the king is in pursuit of an antelope. The cruelty of the chase appears like a menace symbolising the spirit of the king's life clashing against the spirit of the forest retreat, which is "sharanyam sarva-bhútánám" (where all creatures find their protection of love). And the pleading of the forest-dwellers with the king to spare the life of the deer, helplessly innocent and beau-

tiful, is the pleading that rises from the heart of the whole drama. "Never, oh, never is the arrow meant to pierce the tender body of a deer, even as the fire is not for the burning of flowers."

In the *Ramayana*, Rama and his companions, in their banishment, had to traverse forest after forest; they had to live in leaf-thatched huts, to sleep on the bare ground. But as their hearts felt their kinship with woodland, hill, and stream, they were not in exile amidst these. Poets, brought up in an atmosphere of different ideals, would have taken this opportunity of depicting in dismal colours the hardship of the forest-life in order to bring out the martyrdom of Râmachandra with all the emphasis of a strong contrast. But, in the *Ramayana*, we are led to realise the greatness of the hero, not in a fierce struggle with Nature, but in sympathy with it. Sítâ, the daughter-in-law of a great kingly house, goes along the forest paths. We read:

"She asks Râma about the flowering trees, and shrubs and creepers which she has not seen before. At her request Lakshmana gathers and brings her plants of all kinds, exuberant with flowers, and it delights her

heart to see the forest rivers, variegated with their streams and sandy banks, resounding with the call of heron and duck.

“When Râma first took his abode in the Chitrakuta peak, that delightful Chitrakuta, by the Mâlyavati river, with its easy slopes for landing, he forgot all the pain of leaving his home in the capital at the sight of those woodlands, alive with beast and bird.”

Having lived on that hill for long, Râma, who was “giri-vana-priya” (lover of the mountain and the forest), said one day to Sîtâ:

“When I look upon the beauties of this hill, the loss of my kingdom troubles me no longer, nor does the separation from my friends cause me any pang.”

Thus passed Râmachandra’s exile, now in woodland, now in hermitage. The love which Râma and Sîtâ bore to each other united them, not only to each other, but to the universe of life. That is why, when Sîtâ was taken away, the loss seemed to be so great to the forest itself.

### III

Strangely enough, in Shakespeare’s dramas, like those of Kâlidâsa, we find a secret vein

of complaint against the artificial life of the king's court—the life of ungrateful treachery and falsehood. And almost everywhere, in his dramas, forest scenes have been introduced in connection with some working of the life of unscrupulous ambition. It is perfectly obvious in *Timon of Athens*—but there Nature offers no message or balm to the injured soul of man. In *Cymbeline* the mountainous forest and the cave appear in their aspect of obstruction to life's opportunities. These only seem tolerable in comparison with the vicissitudes of fortune in the artificial court life. In *As You Like It* the forest of Arden is didactic in its lessons. It does not bring peace, but preaches, when it says:

Hath not old custom made this life more sweet  
Than that of painted pomp? Are not these woods  
More free from peril than the envious court?

In the *Tempest*, through Prospero's treatment of Ariel and Caliban we realise man's struggle with Nature and his longing to sever connection with her. In *Macbeth*, as a prelude to a bloody crime of treachery and treason, we are introduced to a scene of barren heath where the three witches appear as personifications of Nature's malignant forces; and in *King Lear* it is the fury of a father's

love turned into curses by the ingratitude born of the unnatural life of the court that finds its symbol in the storm on the heath. The tragic intensity of *Hamlet* and *Othello* is unrelieved by any touch of Nature's eternity. Except in a passing glimpse of a moonlight night in the love scene in *The Merchant of Venice*, Nature has not been allowed in other dramas of this series, including *Romeo and Juliet* and *Antony and Cleopatra*, to contribute her own music to the music of man's love. In *The Winter's Tale* the cruelty of a king's suspicion stands bare in its relentlessness and Nature cowers before it, offering no consolation.

I hope it is needless for me to say that these observations are not intended to minimise Shakespeare's great power as a dramatic poet, but to show in his works the gulf between Nature and human nature owing to the tradition of his race and time. It cannot be said that beauty of nature is ignored in his writings; only he fails to recognise in them the truth of the inter-penetration of human life with the cosmic life of the world. We observe a completely different attitude of mind in the later English poets like Wordsworth and Shelley, which can be attributed

in the main to the great mental change in Europe, at that particular period, through the influence of the newly discovered philosophy of India which stirred the soul of Germany and aroused the attention of other Western countries.

In Milton's *Paradise Lost*, the very subject—Man dwelling in the garden of Paradise—seems to afford a special opportunity for bringing out the true greatness of man's relationship with Nature. But though the poet has described to us the beauties of the garden, though he has shown to us the animals living there in amity and peace among themselves there is no reality of kinship between them and man. They were created for man's enjoyment; man was their lord and master. We find no trace of the love between the first man and woman gradually surpassing themselves and overflowing the rest of creation, such as we find in the love scenes in *Kumara-Sambhava* and *Shakuntala*. In the seclusion of the bower, where the first man and woman rested in the garden of Paradise.—

“ Bird, beast, insect or worm  
Durst enter none, such was their awe of man.

**Not that India denied the superiority of man,**

but the test of that superiority lay, according to her, in the comprehensiveness of sympathy, not in the aloofness of absolute distinction.

#### IV

India holds sacred, and counts as places of pilgrimage, all spots which display a special beauty or splendour of nature. These had no original attraction on account of any special fitness for cultivation or settlement. Here, man is free, not to look upon Nature as a source of supply of his necessities, but to realise his soul beyond himself. The Himâlayas of India are sacred and the Vindhya Hills. Her majestic rivers are sacred. Lake Mânasa and the confluence of the Ganges and the Jamuna are sacred. India has saturated with her love and worship the great Nature with which her children are surrounded, whose light fills their eyes with gladness, and whose water cleanses them, whose food gives them life, and from whose majestic mystery comes forth the constant revelation of the infinite in music, scent, and colour, which brings its awakening to the soul of man. India gains the world through worship, through spiritual communion; and the idea of freedom to which she aspired was

based upon the realisation of her spiritual unity.

When, in my recent voyage to Europe, our ship left Aden and sailed along the sea which lay between the two continents, we passed by the red and barren rocks of Arabia on our right side and the gleaming sands of Egypt on our left. They seemed to me like two giant brothers exchanging with each other burning glances of hatred, kept apart by the tearful entreaty of the sea from whose womb they had their birth.

There was an immense stretch of silence on the left shore as well as on the right, but the two shores spoke to me of the two different historical dramas enacted. The civilisation which found its growth in Egypt was continued across long centuries, elaborately rich with sentiments and expressions of life, with pictures, sculptures, temples, and ceremonials. This was a country whose guardian-spirit was a noble river, which spread the festivities of life on its banks across the heart of the land. There man never raised the barrier of alienation between himself and the rest of the world.

On the opposite shore of the Red Sea the civilisation which grew up in the inhospitable

soil of Arabia had a contrary character to that of Egypt. There man felt himself isolated in his hostile and bare surroundings. His idea of God became that of a jealous God. His mind naturally dwelt upon the principle of separateness. It roused in him the spirit of fight, and this spirit was a force that drove him far and wide. These two civilisations represented two fundamental divisions of human nature. The one contained in it the spirit of conquest and the other the spirit of harmony. And both of these have their truth and purpose in human existence.

The characters of two eminent sages have been described in our mythology. One was Vashishtha and another Vishvâmitra. Both of them were great, but they represented two different types of wisdom; and there was conflict between them. Vishvâmitra sought to achieve power and was proud of it; Vashishtha was rudely smitten by that power. But his hurt and his loss could not touch the illumination of his soul; for he rose above them and could forgive. Râmachandra the great hero of our epic, had his initiation to the spiritual life from Vashishtha, the life of inner peace and perfection. But he had his initiation to war from Vishvâmitra, who

called him to kill the demons and gave him weapons that were irresistible.

Those two sages symbolise in themselves the two guiding spirits of civilisation. Can it be true that they shall never be reconciled? If so, can ever the age of peace and co-operation dawn upon the human world? Creation is the harmony of contrary forces, the forces of attraction and repulsion. When they join hands, all the fire and fight are changed into the smile of flowers and the songs of birds. When there is only one of them triumphant and the other defeated, then either there is the death of cold rigidity or that of suicidal explosion.

Humanity, for ages, has been busy with the one great creation of spiritual life. Its best wisdom, its discipline, its literature and art, all the teachings and self-sacrifice of its noblest teachers, have been for this. But the harmony of contrary forces, which give their rhythm to all creation, has not yet been perfected by man in his civilisation, and the Creator in him is baffled over and over again. He comes back to his work, however, and makes himself busy, building his world in the midst of desolation and ruins. His history  
the history of his aspiration interrupted

and renewed. And one truth of which he must be reminded, therefore, is that the power which accomplishes the miracle of creation, by bringing conflicting forces into the harmony of the One, is no passion, but a love which accepts the bonds of self-control from the joy of its own immensity—a love whose sacrifice is the manifestation of its endless wealth—within itself.

## INDIAN WOMEN POETS

NICOL MACNICOL, M.A., D.LITT.

No one who knows anything of India to-day can doubt that in all periods of her history—whatever may have been the social laws and conventions—the influence of women was powerful and profound. Even in the assemblies of the ṛisis, who gathered in the forests to discuss the meaning of Brahman and the way to immortality, the voices of wise women could be heard. Gārgī comes to Yājñavalkya with two questions, like a warrior, as she says, setting two arrows to his bow, and Yājñavalkya does not despise his adversary. So also to Maitrēyī, one of his two wives, the same philosopher unfolded some of the subtlest and noblest and most elusive lessons that the Upaniṣads contain, so subtle and so elusive that many another

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Note :—This paper is based upon a volume of *Poems by Indian Women*, issued in the *Heritage of India Series* under the general editorship of Mrs. N. Macnicol. Specimens of the work of women poets, translated by various collaborators, chiefly women, are collected in this volume.

might well say with this honest woman, 'My lord hath brought me to the bound of bewilderment, and I understand it not'. Women, if they have been mystics, have generally in all lands been, like Saint Teresa, practical mystics, no lovers of wire-drawn doctrines for their own sakes, but lovers of a truth to live by. And in India we may be sure that from the earliest days there were, unobtrusive, no doubt, and often hidden by the purdah, women of strong character, of robust practical sagacity, the inspirers often, the succourers always, of men. Ahilyabāī yesterday, Pandita Ramabāī to-day—there never, we may be sure, have been lacking such broad-minded, steadfast, capable, managers, whether it be of a kingdom or of a household, who spread round about them order and contentment and trust. But it is not of the women philosophers of India, nor yet of her practical women of affairs, that I wish to write here, but of her women poets, for it is in the poet, man or woman, that we can discover the deepest secret of any people, the ideals that, they have hid in their hearts, and the thoughts and dreams by which they have lived.'

It is a little difficult to know how to approach

this subject, seeing that the women we have to deal with are so widely scattered across the centuries during three thousand years, and so widely scattered across the broad plains of India. They speak a bewildering variety of languages, and belong to a bewildering variety of ages, and yet there is, beneath every difference, a unity of speech that proclaims them all as children of one mother, heirs of a single heritage. When can we say that the figure of a woman poet first emerges from the shadows of the past? Is the earliest of whom we have any certain knowledge the Greek lyrist, Sappho, of whom, indeed, we know little enough? We may be sure that there were women from the very dawn of time in whose hearts were the seeds of poetry, whether or not they ever discovered fit expression for their disquieting thoughts.

Very old are we men. Our dreams are tales  
Told in dim Eden by Eve's nightingales;

and these tales could never have been told, nor these dreams dreamed, if there were not an Eve to hearken in whom was a poet's soul. Already from among the Vedic Hymns, those earliest literary products of the Indian genius, there are some that are attributed to women authors. How far the names traditionally

attached to these hymns can be accepted as the names of those who actually composed them is indeed doubtful. It is, however, at least interesting to know that primitive tradition did not deny to women the right to a place among the *rishi*s who sang these ancient songs and led the worship of these ancient deities. But the subjects of their poems are not necessarily exalted. It may be estrangement from a husband, the fear of living unmarried, or the desire to be rid of a rival wife, that drives them with prayer and adoration to the gods. Then, as to-day, it is whatever awakens the deepest emotions that creates the poet. What may seem a foolish toy to us may be something that was rooted in the very soul of that far-off Vedic woman, and when the pain moved her to cry aloud that cry became a song. Everything that touches human life in its infinite variety is transmutable into what we call poetry. It may take the form of a nursery rhyme, or it may take the form of an epic. Who will say what wandering wind among the reeds will awaken the eternal harmonies? The first notes that reach our ears from the lute of an Indian woman are parts, humble perhaps in themselves, in the great symphony of those

singers who chant their praises and their prayers before the altars of the Vedic gods.

These Vedic women singers are so far off from us, and their voices sound so thin and so remote in our ears to-day, that we need scarcely heed them. We cannot, indeed, be sure whether they really were living women or whether they are no more than personifications. In any case they are to be remembered more for the company in which they are found than for anything that they can be discerned to have been or that they say to us. But when we pass to the next group of women poets, the case is different. Then we feel that we are listening to authentic voices, and that they speak to us what we recognise at once as the authentic message of this ancient land. Among all peoples, indeed, one of the most fruitful springs of poetic inspiration is the longing to return home from exile, whether the return be to one's own land, or to the loved one's breast, or to the bosom of God. 'It is the sorrow of separation,' says Dr. Rabindranath Tagore, 'That ever melts and flows in song through my poet's heart.' 'And of those three types of exile that I have named, that which India more than any other land has felt in the deep

places of her soul is the exile from God, the exile from that which is eternal. This feeling had not awakened, it would seem, at the time when the Vedic Hymns were composed, but from the days of Buddha onward a note of deep soul-longing rings through the poetry of India. This nostalgia, this homesickness, has been expressed with amazing depth and passion by the Buddhist nuns, whose poems have been beautifully rendered by Mrs. Rhys Davids in her *Psalms of the Sisters*.

Perhaps the most striking and resonant note of all those that sound in these Psalms is that of exultation in the attainment of release. I think it is Sister Nivedita who has said that the most passionate desire of the Indian soul throughout all its history has been for freedom. This is not, I need hardly say, the *Swarajya* that occupies so much attention to-day. It is deliverance from the bondage of the world and time and *samsara*. Certainly in those far-off days, when it would seem sorrow and the fear of death and of rebirth 'hung like a pall' over multitudes in this land, that desire to escape had become a passion in those women's hearts. Of one, named Mutta, we are told that she was given in marriage to a hunch-backed Brāhman, but

succeeded in obtaining his permission to forsake the world and seek for that release that Buddha taught. Here is how she describes her attainment of the goal :

O free indeed ! O gloriously free  
 Am I in freedom from three crooked things,—  
 From quern, from mortar, from my crook-  
 backed lord.  
 Ay, but I'm free from rebirth and from death,  
 And all that dragged me back is hurled away.

It is not easy to be sure—I dare say she could not have told herself—how far her joy was for an earthly release or for a spiritual attainment. Mutta and her sisters were different enough in their outlook from Lovelace and the English Restoration poets, and yet in the letter at least their claims are closely akin.

Stone walls do not a prison make,  
 Nor iron bars a cage.

'If I have freedom in my love'—the Buddhist sisters would not have used such words as these, for they have abjured the love alike of earth and heaven. Here is a picture of another among them, on her bare and solitary hill-top with the winds—shall we say of life or of death ?—blowing about her :

Though I be suffering and weak, and all .  
 My youthful spring be gone, yet I have come,  
 Leaning upon my staff, and clomb aloft  
 The mountain peak. My cloak thrown off,  
 My little bowl o'erturned; so sit I here  
 Upon the rock. And o'er my spirit sweeps  
 The breath of Liberty! I win, I win  
 The triple lore! The Bu'dha's will is done.

What these poets above all things desire is inward tranquillity, victory over the world, with 'its sick hurry, its divided aims', its bondage. Passion must be stilled within them. Here is the way that Pātācāra shows as the way of comfort in bereavement:

Why mournest thou for him who came to thee,—  
 Lamenting through thy tears, 'My son, my son'.—  
 Seeing thou knowest not the way he came,  
 Nor yet the manner of his leaving thee.

By such cool waters their consuming grief is quenched, and these pale Buddhist sisters pass from our sight, chanting each her hymn of attainment of peace. Who shall decide whether we should call it a dirge or whether we should call it a paean of victory? In the words of Mrs. Rhys Davids, 'If freedom drew, not less did sorrow drive.'

Woful is woman's lot, hath he declared,  
 Tamer and Driver of the hearts of men.'

It is not strange that in the poetry •of women there should be especially this strain of sadness. To them, more than to any

others of the human race, it has been appointed, as to the Madonna herself, that a sword should pass through their souls. But these courageous women of old time have looked into the heart of sorrow, and have plucked thence calm and strength—what Mrs. Rhys Davids calls ‘an impassioned quietude’. And, having attained to such a ‘forced and despairing peace’, they do not rest in it selfishly, but go forth to help and strengthen others. One passes unwillingly from the company of these gracious, dignified figures, ‘roaming like a dream’ the silent spaces of that far-off age.

And when we pass from them we pass into the bewildering confusion of the many tongues of medieval and modern India. The Hymns of the Rig Veda were written in Sanskrit, the Psalms of the Buddhist Sisters in Pāli, but we have now to turn to the speech of common folks, as it has been spoken for many centuries in the various provinces of the land, and as it is spoken about us to-day. Women had not always the right, and they had seldom the opportunity, to learn and use the sacred language of the learned. But the time came when neither men nor women could any longer be baulked of self-expression in the language that they knew best and

that spoke to their hearts. Then began the blossoming of a new literature in Hindi, Marāthi, Gujerāti, Urdu, Tamil, and all the other tongues that the common people spoke.

It is not easy to pick one's way through the midst of this bewildering variety, or to judge of the qualities of these poets' work through the medium of a very imperfect translation. I propose to select, somewhat arbitrarily, from one language or another, what appears to me to be most interesting and most characteristic. Surveying the whole development, we see what we have already had occasion to note, that the heart of the Indian poet, whether he writes in a classical language or in the language of the people, is engaged more with eternity than with time. There are few songs of human love, but many of the divine love. There is little in praise of the world's beauty or of life's joys and affections, but much in praise of the stony path of renouncement. Many of these poets, women as well as men, turn away from the colour and the joy of life and the comforts of earthly love. Their music is for the most part played, as one of them says, on a 'stringless lute'. The music that they make is indeed only incidental to their worship and their longing. These poet

saints are saints first and poets afterwards, and, as we see them, fallen upon the world's great altar-stairs, they appear to be among the most austere and passionate of all the world-renouncers.

But it is only with the women among them that I have to deal. I think that the most remarkable of those of whom I have any knowledge is the Marāthi poet, sister of the great Jñānesvar, Muktā Bāī. She is a dim figure, and some have resolved her into a philosophical category, but we may, I think, accept the view that she and her three brothers lived in the thirteenth century of our era. She is a worthy sister of Gārgī and Maitrēyī, and moves easily and confidently among terms of Vedanta philosophy that might well make our modern brains reel. The story is well known of how she and her brothers were outcasted as being 'sannyāsi's children', and how, by their learning and their miraculous powers, they won their way to respect. Tradition says that she died at the age of sixteen, and if, indeed, she did, and wrote her poems before that age, that in itself was a sufficient miracle to convince the most stubborn unbelievers of her superhuman gifts. We find her singing, even as the Buddhist sisters did, though in

language more philosophical and less personal, the same desire for freedom that so moved them, and the same longing for an inward peace. She is a traveller along the lonely road of monism. 'Nivṛitti', she says, speaking of her brother and her *guru*,

Nivṛitti, who has torn from out his soul  
 All seed of passion, certainly declares  
 That all are one; and Mukta Bai  
 With mind firm fixed upon the road  
 To freedom—road that ne'er can weary one—  
 Attains the knowledge of the endless One,  
 Who fills finite and infinite alike.

Again she expresses in a beautiful figure, a figure appropriate to one who, though a philosopher, is still a woman, the same desire:

Sleep calm and still, my child, where far beyond  
 All talk of form or formlessness,  
 Thy cradle has been swung within  
 The very lotus of the heart itself.

She is speaking to the child of her spirit, Chāngdev, who is said to have become her disciple. A simpler and more quaint and human interest attaches to a poem said to have been written by her as an expostulation with her great brother, Jñānesvar, when he was angry with her and shut her out of his hut:

• Graciously thy heart incline;  
 Open to me, brother mine!  
 He's a saint who knoweth how  
 To the world's abuse to bow....  
 Thou pervading Brahman art;  
 How should anger fill thy heart?  
 Such a poised soul be thine.  
 Open to me, brother mine.<sup>1</sup>

Muktā Bāī was a Brāhmaṇ and a philosopher. About 100 or, perhaps, 150 years after her time, another poetess arose from among the Marāṭhā people of a far humbler origin, but with a more passionate and appealing note in the music that she made. Janā Bāī was a servant woman in the household of the tailor poet, Nāmdev, and gave herself, as he did, to the worship of Viṭhōba. The god is declared in the legend to have been constantly in her company, grinding corn for her, drawing water, helping her to wash the clothes. 'Of God', she says,

Of God my meat and drink I make;  
 God is the bed on which I lie;  
 God is whate'er I give or take:  
 God's constant fellowship have I.

She expresses as her master Nāmdev did, with extraordinary poignancy of desire, the longing of the human heart for the divine fellowship. The purpose of this paper is not to deal at all with the religious teachings

<sup>1</sup> *Psalms of Maratha Saints*, by N. Macnicol, p. 41.

of these saints. It is not as saints that we view them here, but as poets; but as I have said already, any worthy or deeply felt emotion lends itself, in a moment when the subject of the emotion is lifted out of himself or herself, to poetic expression.

Poetry is

The hand that wrings,  
Bruised albeit at the strings,  
Music from the heart of things,

and there is a music that issues from the very heart of the universe is such a cry as this of Janā Bāī:

Blind one am I, and he that was my staff,  
Where hideth he ?  
In what strange woodland tarriest thou,  
my hind,  
While I, thy dumb fawn, stray lost and  
seek my home in vain ?  
Apart from thee what can I do ?  
How longer hold to life ?  
O let me meet my Mother ! Such the  
prayer  
Thy Servant Jani pours before the saints.

Man is a wanderer from his birth, a voyager on the great deep. Whether the poet be Janā Bāī or Dante or Percy Bysshe Shelley, the cry is the same cry in them all:

The desire of the moth for the star,  
Of the night for the morrow,  
The devotion to something afar  
From the sphere of our sorrow.

It is not easy in the older Indian literature to discover any inspiration that is not a religious inspiration. In long periods of literary history the word saint seems almost to be a synonym of the word poet. If we turn from Marāthi to Gujerāti and to Hindi the tale is still the same. Mirā Bāī was a queen and a poet, but she was first and last a devotee of Kṛiṣṇa. The story is well known of how she counted the world well lost for him. At last, according to the legend, she cast herself before the image of the god and besought him to take her wholly to himself. Thereupon, as the tale is told by Tod in his *Rajasthan*, ‘The god descended from his pedestal and gave her an embrace which extricated the spark of life. “Welcome, Mirā,” said the lover of Rādhā, and her soul was absorbed into his’. It is not easy, one has to confess, to appreciate through translations either the passion or the poetry in this lady’s verse. And yet there must be something there, some tone or accent that escapes us but that appeals to the hearts of many Indian women. It may be the glamour of an old story, waking what Kabīr calls ‘the unstruck music’ in their souls, something in them that one of another race cannot recover. However we may explain it, this is how the

influence of this poet princess is described to-day by a Gujerāti scholar. ‘In a thousand sweet and homely songs’, he says, ‘the broken heart of Mirā Bāī sung itself out, and the love which the Rānā had claimed in vain was poured upon the divine and invisible ideal of her soul, and her songs live to this day, after 400 years. Pious women in Gujerat sing them in the presence of the same ideal, and feel they are nearer heaven than earth when Mirā’s music is on their tongues. Young women sing them at home and in public choruses, for Mirā’s ideal is held to be the ideal for all women, and the heart of Mirā was pure and innocent and god-fearing, as the heart of woman should be’.

In some ways it is a relief to turn from these ‘God-intoxicated’ women to one whose romantic story has passion enough in it, but a passion that is very human and earthly. The story of Rūpamati, the Hindu wife of Bāj Bahādur, a Mohammedan and the last independent ruler of Malwa, is well known throughout the Rājputāna and Central India States, and her songs, though they have never been printed, are widely known and sung among the village people. She is said to have lived with her lord for seven happy

years, but the end, when it came was tragedy. When her husband was defeated by Akbar and became a fugitive, to escape dishonour she perished by her own hand. The love for each other of these two has supplied a theme not only for the poet but for the painter, and a charming scene, showing husband and wife riding together, is represented by artists of the Mogul School. Here is one of Rūpamati's poems in celebration of her love, as translated by Sir Henry Cunningham :

Friend, let others boast their treasure,—  
Mine's a stock of true love's pleasure,  
Safely cared for, every part,  
'Neath that trusty lock, my heart,—  
Safe from other women's peeping,  
For the key's in mine own keeping.  
Day by day it grows a little,  
Never loses e'en a tittle ;  
But through life will never go  
With Baz Bahadur, weal or woe.

That tale and that charming avowal of affection must suffice to show that the Indian soul, for all its unearthly yearnings, was still capable of very simple and very human love and loyalty.

We have travelled across the plains of India from one province to another, and back through the centuries over two thousand years, and yet we have heard those women,

with scarcely an exception, improvising upon one great theme, engrossed with a single subject. If we went to other parts of the country and listened to other voices we would still find them occupied with God and with eternity. If we try Tamil or Malayālam in the south, or go, instead, far north to Kashmir, still we find that, whether it be poet or poetess that sings, it is upon the other world, and not upon this, that their gaze is fixed. Of Āndal, a Tamil Vaiṣṇavite poetess, we are told that, like Mirā Bāī, she refused to marry any one but Krisṇa. Lāl Ded, the Kashmīrī poetess, was a wandering mendicant. Her verses are more gnomic than lyric; they have more of *jnana* than of *bhakti* in them, but here is one expressing the universal desire with a beautiful simplicity:

O heedless one, speedily lift up thy foot (and set out).

Now it is dawn ; seek thou for the Friend.

Make to thyself wings ; lift thou up the winged feet.

Now it is dawn. Seek thou for the Friend.

There is one exception among these groups of poets of the earlier time in India to this engrossment with religion and its imperative demands. Persian is not an indigenous Indian language, but during the period of Moslem

rule in India, Persian was the court language and the many poets that frequented the Court naturally wrote in it. Much of this versifying was little more than an elegant accomplishment, but some of those who practised it had a real poetic gift, and among these there were several women. In their company we find ourselves in a wholly different atmosphere. The love they sing is usually a very human and earthly passion, and their wisdom is the wisdom of this world. These ladies belong to a very different class of society from the mendicants and ascetics of whom we have mostly been speaking. One of them, Razia Begum, was herself a powerful and successful ruler. Nūr Jehān was exposed when a girl by the roadside to die, but became the queen of the Emperor Jehāngir. Zeb-un-Nissa Begum was a daughter of the Emperor Aurangzēb, and there is a legend, which, however, has no authority, that she was imprisoned in a fortress because of her secret love for Shivāji, whom she may have seen when he was himself a prisoner at her father's Court. Nūr Jehān describes the prevailing occupation of her poetic gift in this similitude: 'The bud may open by the morning breeze which blows in the garden, but the key to the

lock of my heart is the smile of my beloved'. Of Zeb-un-Nissa I am able to give an example in a rendering of one of her poems by one who is herself a distinguished Indian poetess, Mrs. Sarojini Naidu. The poem is called 'The Song of the Princess Zeb-un-Nissa, in praise of her own beauty':

When from my cheek I lift the veil,  
The roses turn with envy pale,  
And from their pierced hearts rich with pain,  
Send forth their fragrance like a wail.  
Or if, perchance, one perfumed tress  
Be lowered to the wind's caress,  
The honeyed hyacinths complain,  
And languish in a sweet distress.  
And when I pause, still groves among,  
(Such loveliness is mine) a throng  
Of nightingales awake and strain  
Their souls into a quivering song.

How much of this poem is to be attributed to Zeb-un-Nissa and how much to her gifted translator I do not know, but in any case they are both Indian women poets of whom India can be proud.

In modern times, with the entry into India of Western culture and literature, new sources of inspiration have been made available to those who are moved to poetic expression; and a wider variety of subjects has been brought within the poet's scope. One cannot but notice that the beauty of the world about

them seldom furnishes a subject to the older poets. The thought that it is all illusion seems to thrust itself between them and the joy that it might bring. It is, as far as I can judge, in the poetry of Bengal especially, that one sees this new birth of Indian inspiration, though it is to be found also in the Marāthi poetry of to-day. With Dr. Rabindranath Tagore, Indian poetry has entered into possession of a new and far wider dominion. Of him it has been said that he is 'the representative man of his time, in touch with the fulness of his intellectual heritage'. It would seem that there are several Bengali women poets who share this full heritage with him, and whose poetry displays a new variety of interest. I cannot quote from the work of more than two of these ladies, but a glance at the translations from their works shows how the claims of natural affection and the sights and scenes of the world about them, and, perhaps most notably of all, the duty of service of the poor, and of help for the suffering and the fallen, now furnish their chief themes in a manner that is wholly modern and new. Mrs. Kamini Roy, for example, has these verses in one of her poems: 'Lamp in' hand he went, not

alone; on the way the light went out and so he fell. Will you not in mercy take his hand and raise him up? Will you not pause for him one half moment, friends? Let him kindle his lamp from your own lights. Let him go forward holding your hands. If you pass, leaving him in the mud in darkness, he will always remain plunged in the blackness of night.' One other example of the work of modern Bengali women poets must be quoted. It is by Mrs. Sarojabala Dasgupta, and is translated by an Englishman who is himself a poet, Mr. E. J. Thompson.

Lo, where the bird at rest  
 Twitters in careless ease upon her nest!  
 Throughout all storm wherewith the loud tree  
     swings  
 Broods in the sky-flier's breast the pride of  
     wings.  
 Though soft leaves interlace,  
 Making a hiding-place,  
 The sheltered life within does not forget  
 How strong she is, how free, by Nature's right!  
 Though nest and foliage fall, her refuge yet  
 Remains, the boundless heaven's unpillared  
     height!

What a difference it makes when we have one poet interpreting another! —

One is tempted to linger over the poetesses who have broken down the barrier of language and achieved noble expression for India

in the English tongue. Of Mrs. Sarojini Naidu's work I have already given an example. Its perfection of finish and technical accomplishment win one's astonished admiration. She expresses herself with complete ease and charm in this foreign medium. To Toru Dutt, however, belongs the honour of being the amazing pioneer in this department of Indian literature—Toru Dutt, that 'sleepless soul'; that marvellous girl that perished ere her prime. The story is famous of how the great English critic, Edmund Gosse, opened without expectation an unattractive pamphlet of verse, published at Bhowanipore, and read these lines :

Still barred thy door ! The far east glows,  
The morning wind blows fresh and free.  
Should not the hour that wakes the rose  
Awaken also thee ?

All look for thee, Love, Light and Song,—  
Light in the sky deep red above,  
Song in the lark of pinions strong  
And in my heart true love.

As a matter of fact, it appears that that poem was not by Toru Dutt, but by her sister, Aru, but it must suffice as an example of the work of this gifted family. Toru's work is by no means faultless, but it is full of spirit and inspiration. In one of her poems she describes

three children, herself and her two sisters, listening as their mother sings to them of Sita in the forest. As they listen, ‘tears from three pairs of young eyes fall amain, And bowed in sorrow are the three young heads’. I think that picture of the three Bengali girls and their mother, listening with melting hearts to that old tale, is one with which we may fittingly conclude this review of the work of India’s women poets. From the days of Sita to the days of Toru Dutt there have never been lacking in India women of true and loyal and passionate hearts, who could both live poetry and make it. When Indian women look back upon that long and notable inheritance, they may well be filled with pride in the past and with hope for the future. The spirit of India is still, to use the Bengali poetess’s word, a ‘sky-flier’, and there ‘broods in the sky-flier’s breast the pride of wings’.

## RAJA RAM MOHAN ROY

HON. MR. JUSTICE MAHADEVA GOVIND  
RANADE

It has been arranged that after service this day, I should speak to you a few words about the life and teachings of Raja Ram Mohan Roy. All of you are aware that this day, the 27th of September, is the anniversary of his death. He died while he was on a visit to England; and his remains were buried there by loving friends. He died in 1833; we are in 1896. We are therefore, celebrating in this place on this occasion the sixty-third anniversary of the death of this great man. Among the orthodox community, this particular fortnight—the dark half of the month of *Bhadrapada*—is dedicated by a very ancient and a very useful custom to commemorate the death of our departed ancestors. Each man and woman tries during these fifteen days to remember the debt of gratitude he or she owes to those who gave them birth; and though in this *Samaja*, this practice has no place and we may not follow the outward

observances, the sense of filial love and duty, which moves thousands of people in all parts of the country to show their gratitude for the debt due to our ancestors—has a significance and a truth which we cannot afford to ignore. This is then the sixty-third anniversary of the death of a person who might well be called one of the fathers of the Brahma Church. I say one of the fathers, and advisedly. Because I hold, as I have said on many other occasions, that we, the members of the *Brahma Samaja*, can claim a long ancestry, as old as any of the sects prevailing in the country. The Brahma movement was not first brought into existence in 1828; we are representatives of an old race; as old as the Bhagwat Gita and the Bhágwat Purána; much older still; as old as Nárada, Prahláda, and Vásudewa and the nine sages who visited Janaka. From that time there is a continuity of *Sadhus* and saints down to the present day. Raja Ram Mohan Roy, as I said, was thus one of the fathers of the Brahma Church but he was neither ~~the~~ first nor the last. For even in these modern times we have had the founder of the Swámi Náráyana sect, Keshava Chandra Sen, and Pandit Dayananda Saraswati; which fact

shows that the old fire, that animated those who have made this land the sacred birthplace of many religions and religious movements, has not been burnt out. Before, however, I come to speak about Raja Ram Mohan Roy's life and teachings, some of you will be interested, I believe, if I draw your attention to the fact that while the anniversaries celebrated in the case of Gods and birthdays in the case of men are allowed to be buried and for the most part forgotten, we find that it is the anniversaries of the deaths of great men that are honoured all over the world. There must be some meaning in this custom so universally prevalent among Christians, Mahomedans, Parsis, Buddhists, and Hindus; it could not well have been a mere accident that, while the *Jayanties* of gods and incarnations are the days of their births, in the case of men we celebrate the time when they leave us. There is a very good and sufficient reason for this difference. No man, till death takes him away from the temptations of this world, can say, to himself, nor can it be said of him by his friends, that the man's life's purpose has been accomplished. A Greek philosopher was asked a similar question. He said, 'Wait till that particular man dies before you sing any

song about him'. The life that we lead here has a serious purpose; it is to be guided by discipline, and discipline is, as you know, always a hard master. Out of the hundreds of thousands who start in the race of life those who reach the goal are but few. Temptations lie in the way, and the difficulties that we experience disable many of us, and it cannot safely be said till a man's death that his life's purpose has been accomplished or that his is a life worthy of the purpose for which he was sent into this world. That is the reason why in the case of men it is the anniversary of death that is commemorated by those who remain after him. No man can be called great who has not, to the last hour of his life, fulfilled the responsibility which greatness implies; and this brings us to the consideration of the question, what constitutes the greatness of the men we love to honour after their death. When we celebrate the anniversaries of our own ancestors, of our fathers and grandfathers, mothers and grandmothers, the question is not whether they are great or whether they are not great. To every one of us our father's and mother's are always objects of reverence as the ancestors who gave us birth, and whatever may be

their failings, the mere fact that they are persons to whom we owe all that we have, constitutes a debt of gratitude which we are bound to discharge by celebrating their memories at least once a year in a more solemn manner than we may be disposed to do on other occasions; but when we make a public commemoration of our great men, the question naturally arises: ‘What is it that constitutes greatness in the sense in which you and I and everybody else understand the word? What is it that constitutes this greatness of character? There are various views held on this subject. To such of you as are interested in this study I would recommend a very careful perusal of some of the English authors, especially Carlyle on ‘Heroes and Hero-worship’ or Emerson on ‘Great or Representative Men’. These two books will place before you all that might be said on this question: ‘What is it that makes a man great, so that we should be anxious to keep green his memory from year to year?’ One view, that is Carlyle’s view, is that sincerity of purpose and earnestness of conviction make a man great. Every one of us can feel that there is a good deal of truth in that observation. All of us are more or less acting parts on the

theatre of this world. Every one of us, be he small or great, be he learned or unlearned, each of us has a small stage; on that he struts and strides, moves about and goes on, persuading others as he also persuades himself that he is not playing a part but that he is playing the reality. However, when he is shut up in his own chamber, when nobody sees him, then you find that every one of us is disposed to wonder and to laugh at the way in which he moved in this theatre. For the most of us there is no reality about it. Sincerity of purpose and earnestness of conviction certainly go a long way to make a great man's character. If we are wanting in one thing more than another it is in this sincerity and earnestness. In the case of great men, that is, men who are worthy of being so reckoned, you will find that this element of greatness is more or less found in a much larger measure than in the ordinary run of men and women who constitute human society. We may be sincere and earnest on occasions; but habitual sincerity of purpose and habitual earnestness of action are a gift, a possession, and a treasure that are denied to most of us. You may take up the life of any man whom the world

classes as great; and you will find in a large number of such men this trait of character. Take the case of Luther. In his time there were more learned and even better men than himself, such as Erasmus and Melancthon, who were equally gifted and equally endowed. But what was wanting in them was the earnestness of conviction and sincerity of purpose which were found in Luther. We are all of us more or less speaking under constraint, moving under constraint; we know that there is no outside control over us, yet we make our own constraint; and we find that full freedom of movement is not left to us. That is not exactly what constitutes a great man. I will give you another instance of this trait of character in great men. There was a son of a Mahomedan butcher, aged ten or eleven. His father told him to follow his own trade. When, however, the knife was given him and he was told to use it in the way in which his father was using it he said: 'I am not going to use this knife on this poor dumb animal,  
~~till~~ I know how it feels when applied to the sentient parts of my own body; till I am satisfied on this head I will not use the knife.' And so saying he used the knife on ~~his~~

own person first; and feeling that the pain was insufferable, he gave up that trade, he gave up the associations in which he was born, and left the world and retired and thus became the great Mahomedan-Hindu saint of Maharashtra, Shaik Mahomed of Shrigonda. That is one of the traits of character which makes a man great. However, it is not mere sincerity and mere earnestness that go to make a man great. He must be original. He must have imagination which brings him into contact with the infinite and the real. Such men are called geniuses. Things strike them in a way in which they do not strike us. We are so familiar with things that we can scarcely realise the inner spirit in them; somehow or other there is an obtuseness about us which prevents us from seeing things as they are. For instance, there is a story told of *Dayananda Saraswati* as regards the circumstances which led him to leave his home and become a *Sanyasi*. He was, as you know, a great man; there is no denying it, whatever may be our differences with him. Among the men of the present generation few men can be named alongside with him. When a boy he was sent by his father to perform worship in a Shaiva

temple during the night of a fasting day. The father's command was that the boy should sit up all through the night, and see that the water-pot which was hanging over the god was always filled and that water was continuously dripping over it. So the boy of ten or twelve went to the place and sat the night out. At about midnight he found that he was more or less getting sleepy ; he could not keep his hand steady and prevent his eyes from closing involuntarily ; he tried all manner of means, but still he was dozing ; and he found that some of those dirty creatures which are always found in dark and close temples sat unconcernedly over the Linga, and disturbed the flowers. As soon as he heard the noise, he got up and found that the water was falling on the rats instead of over the idol. Well, that is a very common experience of us all, but it suggested to him a new line of thought which made him leave his home. It suggested to him that the dumb mechanical worship had no power in it and that the spirit must approach the Soul of the world in some other way than this. This is only one instance. But it shows how great men are original. Originality or imagination, like sincerity of purpose, is thus an essential trait

in human greatness. There is a third element again. Not only must a great man occupy a higher plane of thought and action but he must have an attraction about him. It cannot be called magnetic, or any other physical form of attraction, but there is such an attraction about him, that it inspires in those about him the same spirit which he feels of self-sacrifice and public devotion. Any man who stands by himself single and whose example and teachings have not succeeded in penetrating into the hearts and intelligences of other people in such a way that these hearts and intelligences are bound to become part of him, cannot be called a great man.

Truthfulness, great impulses, moral aims, resourcefulness to attain those aims by the bond of love and fellowship—these are the traits of character which go to make a great man, and those in whom they are best developed are the greatest of men. You have all read accounts of the life of *Buddha*. He had such a hold upon men's minds that wherever he went hundreds and thousands followed him as the Great Teacher, so that they ensured the permanent success of the movements which he inaugurated—a most unparalleled success in the world's history. Take

again the story of the prophet Mahomed. A poor illiterate man, he did not dream of religion in his youth, and yet at forty he goes into retirement, incessantly moves about in such a country as Arabia to find that he is persecuted and has to fly for life; but there was such an attraction among men and women towards him that in the course of ten or twenty years he was able to dictate terms to the largest and the most powerful potentates of the day. Here then you have a general idea of what constitutes greatness. Earnestness of purpose, sincerity in action, originality, imagination and above all the power of magnetism—we might call it vital or spiritual magnetism—these are the qualities which go to make a man great. I have thus given you my own conception of what a great man is. He is not the richest man, nor the most intelligent man, nor the most cultivated man, nor the most successful man, but a great man is he who, whether he be poor or rich, learned or unlearned, in the profession or out of the profession, successful in life, or unsuccessful in life, the great man is he who combines some of those virtues that I have just attempted to draw your attention to. Having said this much we shall turn to

see whether in Raja Ram Mohan Roy some of these virtues can be found in a way to justify our regard for him as one of the greatest men that India has produced during the last two centuries and as one of the fathers of the Brahma Church movement.

His is a very simple life. He was born in 1774 and he died in 1833; he thus lived for about sixty years; a time which many of us here are now nearing, and some of us have exceeded. He was born a Brahmin. On his mother's side he belonged to the *Shakta* sect, which is the orthodox sect on the Bengal side. On his father's side he came of a family which was well known for its *Vaishnavism*. So the *Shakta* and *Vaishnava* blood joined together in a sort of mutual reconciliation in producing this great man who was destined to accomplish work which this union of a *Vaishnava* father with a *Shakta* mother typified. In those old days when schools and colleges did not exist, this boy at the age of twelve left his village and went to Patna to study Arabic and Persian, which were then the Court languages. At sixteen he went to Benares and there studied Sanskrit for four years, not to be a Pandit, but to understand the real significance of the

old, learning. He thus became an Arabic, Persian and Sanskrit scholar, without knowing a word of English till that age. His familiarity with the Arabic and the Sanskrit philosophy enabled him at the age of sixteen to conceive a dislike to the idolatrous practices which in those parts of Bengal have reached an exaggerated form, with which most of us here are not familiar. There are idolatries and idolatries. But the Bengal system of Kali worship is something of which even we have no idea. This was the sort of idolatry which he denounced at sixteen. We might well compare notes as to what we did at sixteen with such a record. Were any of us lighted up with the fire that burnt in his heart? His father got vexed with him; and he had to leave his home. He went outside of India as far as Thibet and there he became practically familiar with the Buddhistic system. He knew Musulman philosophy, he knew the Sanskrit philosophy, and in the four years' time that he spent in travelling he became familiar with the Buddhistic philosophy. After four years' travelling his father got reconciled with him and allowed him to return home. There at twenty he commenced to learn English, completing that study at

about twenty-five. Till forty he spent his time in the service of the English Government. He did not rise to any very good position; but was, I believe, the Head Clerk or *Shirastadar* to the District Judge or Collector in several places. At forty he retired from the service and for the first time came to Calcutta. Till then he had not taken any part in any of the public movements. He lived twenty years more. From 1814 to 1833, his life was of incessant work which far exceeded in measure the labours of many hundreds of people like ourselves. He was at once a social reformer, the founder of a great religious movement and a great politician. These three activities were combined in him in such a way that they put to shame the performances of the best among us at the present time. Raja Ram Mohan Roy's services to the country were not confined to any particular department of human activity. He waged war against polygamy. He first denounced the practice of *Satee* in 1818 when our Presidency of Bombay came under British rule. From that time to 1828 this crusade was carried on continuously for ten years. But not having obtained success he went on this same mission to England in 1830 when he

was called to give evidence before a Parliamentary Committee that was sitting there. He was also entrusted by the Emperor of Delhi with some political mission. This crusade against *Satee* represents the most prominent side of his social activity. As regards his attempts to revive the pure Monotheism of the *Upanishad* period, it may be noted that after coming to Calcutta in 1814, he established a rudimentary form of the Brahma Church in a spot where people might meet to discuss and also pray, and join in prayer. From 1814 to 1828, this work was carried on with unflagging enthusiasm, and brisk controversy was kept up not only with the orthodox defenders of Hinduism, but with the Christian Missionaries. He called upon both Christians and Hindus to return back to the wisdom of their ancient sages. In the two volumes which are published of his life you will find that nearly one whole volume is devoted to the Raja's publications and pamphlets addressed to the Christian missionaries. The rest of the volume is devoted to his expositions of the *Vedantic* and *Upanishad* philosophy. He was reading and writing, preaching and protesting, refuting and discussing all these twenty years. But while he

was doing all that, he did not abstain from studying the political wants and needs of his time. In those early days, when the Charter of the East India Company was about to be renewed in 1833, he was called from India and he went to England to give most useful evidence before that Committee. Unfortunately, the climate did not agree with him and he fell a sacrifice in his country's cause, among strangers in a foreign land, far away from his dear home.

Here ends a brief exposition of the life of this great man. He started the Brahma Samaja movement and that Samaja is his living memorial. He made efforts for the abolition of the practice of *Satee*, and though he did not live to see the result, the Government felt itself compelled by the labours of this great man to take measures to stop *Satee* by legislation five years after his death. People here are not quite familiar with the enormity of this practice of *Satee* in those days. I know there are some men who still say that it was a wrong step to stop *Satee* or to abolish it. You will have some idea of the enormity of this evil from one of the pamphlets Raja Ram Mohan wrote and the petitions he submitted to Parliament. In

one of those pamphlets figures are given for fourteen years, and in the Lower Provinces of Bengal alone there were eight thousand cases of *Satee*-burning during the fourteen years, and that gives an average of six hundred per year. There was not a single family which had no case of *Satee*-burning in the last century. These *Satee* sacrifices were not voluntary; but women were pressed to immolate themselves. Once a woman said 'yes' in her agony of grief, her relations made it impossible for her to change her mind. If Government had not stopped it we should have had these horrors repeated before our eyes to this day. If the credit of putting an end to these horrors belongs to any man, that credit must be given to Raja Ram Mohan Roy. *Satee*-burning was not the only horror men inflicted on themselves in those early days, but men and women used to drown themselves, or jump down from lofty precipices into waters below and thus invite death in a hundred other forms. If there is credit due to any man for having turned the national current in the right direction in this matter, that credit is due to Raja Ram Mohan. Of his political activities I shall not say anything from this platform.

Anybody who wants to know what true patriotism is, had better study the evidence that he gave and the letters he wrote to men in power over sixty years ago—long before our era of Congress meetings and Conferences.

We shall now turn to the religious movement to which he devoted his chief attention. The Atmiya Sabha of 1814, was developed in the course of fourteen years into the Brahma Samaja, established in 1828. All who wish to know what the Brahma Samaja is, not merely what it is reported to be, cannot, I believe, do better than read the Trust Deed in which are stated by that great man his views about the noble objects and aims of the Brahma Samaja movements. The spirituality, the deep piety and universal toleration which are manifest in every word of this document, represent an ideal of beauty and perfection which has not been realized by his successors, and it may yet take many centuries before its full significance is understood by our people. The future destiny of the Brahma Samaja is concealed in the womb of time. We cannot say it may not fail. We hope it will succeed. But what its founder intended it to be is not a question which we can afford to dispute. I shall tell you what he intended it

to be, and request both those who belong to the Samaja, and those who are outside its pale, to consider whether his conception of it was not as noble as any which the highest among us and in other lands have ever been able to form. What Raja Ram Mohan felt was that we had in India a nation, gifted with a religious history transcending all the records of every other race. Here was a nation, which was gifted, was well endowed, was spiritual in all its real aspirations. This nation had gradually ascended to the conception of the purest form of Monotheism that the world has yet seen. In the *Upanishads* and in the *Bhagvat Gita* it had developed—not by a mere impulse, not by the command of any single prophet, but by the slow process of growth and evolution—a system of the purest form of Monotheism that man can conceive. The higher thought of the nation had learned to place its trust in a Universal Spirit, the One without a second, in whom all lived and moved and had their being, who was the cause of all, the Lord of all, the Friend of all, the Guide of all, the most fatherly of fathers, and the most motherly of mothers. One age after another constructed the edifice, laying brick upon brick and layer upon layer, and storey

after storey rose. Well, this highest conception was not only confined to Pandits, Philosophers and Shastris, but it was the common property of every class, the very lowest of the low, men who were socially not much respected nor very respectable, the poor villager, the hunter, the gardener, the fisherman, the weaver, the goldsmith, the barber, the shopkeeper—they all shared this common faith equally with the Brahmins, the Pandits, and the Yogis.

While Raja Ram Mohan was struck with this universal prevalence of the monotheistic principle, he was deeply pained at the thought that this exalted faith was turned to no practical account because it was associated with external observances and rites which were in entire discord with it. These external rites and observances made the nation worship all manner of gods and goddesses, elemental, mythological, tribal and local divinities, with the most grotesque features and the worst inhuman associations. This polytheism had also grown side by side with the higher teaching of the *Upanishads*, that God was One without a second, and of the *Bhagvat Gita* that He alone was to be worshipped. This contrast between the monotheistic spirit and the polytheistic observances strikes every

student of our religious life as a puzzle which baffles the understanding. You can well imagine how it must have struck a great soul like that of the Raja who from his very boyhood had been brought up an iconoclast and waged war with idolatry of all kinds. He brooded and thought over it, and he worked, and suffered for it in a way of which we have no conception. The question that he put to himself was, how does it come to pass that monolatry does not go hand in hand with monotheism in India, when in other countries where the monotheistic principle is less exclusively professed, monolatry has been for two thousand years and more the prevailing practice? This is the question I request you to consider each for himself. I offer no solution of it myself to-day; because though I have been thinking about it for a long time I have not yet been able to find a rational and consistent solution of the difficulty. The question, you will recollect, is not of idolatry or non-idolatry. That difference relates to the method of devotion and not to the object of worship. The difference to which I have drawn your attention has a deeper source and requires our most anxious consideration. In most cases

idolatry is only a consequence of this practical polytheism which prevails in the land and which leads men against the teachings of their own higher reason to think that one supreme Will does not govern all the operations of nature, but that many gods and goddesses, good and bad deities, or *Devatas*, are permitted to influence the operations of nature and the well-being of man in a hundred different ways, and it is these subordinate powers which must be propitiated each in its own way and on its own day. It is this ceaseless distraction of the mind between the devotion to the One Supreme Lord of all and the claims of the multiple small agents of good and bad influences which is the real evil. There is image worship among the Roman Catholics and there is saint worship and *Pir*-worship among Christians and Mahomedans, but on the whole they do not detract from the monolatrous character of the devotions of these people. With us this limit has been overstepped with the consequent debasement that we see all about us. Ram Mohan Roy naturally felt pained at this modern debasement, and with a view to bring into accord our practical devotions with our monotheistic faith, he gathered together kindred souls who

felt with him on this point and established the Brahma Samaja. He did not regard the Brahma Samaja faith as a new Dispensation, or a new declaration of God's purposes. He aspired only to establish harmony between men's accepted faith and their practical observances by a strict monolatrous worship of the One Supreme Soul, a worship of the heart and not of the hands, a sacrifice of self and not of the possessions of the self. There was nothing foreign in its conception, origin, or method. He wanted men and women to cherish their own ancient treasures of faith and to secure their freedom from the bondage of superstition and ignorance. This was the work which the Brahma Samaja was intended to carry out. It is not for me to say how far that promise has been fulfilled. If it has not been fulfilled, the blame is not his but ours. To us the same problem presents itself to-day, as it did to him early in the century. And it is a problem on the right solution of which our destiny here and hereafter greatly depends. In connection with this anniversary I beseech you to take this great lesson to heart and try to work out its solution in such a way that the integrity of your soul may be restored. When this correspondence between the head

and the heart, this concord between the flesh and the spirit is established, Indian monotheism will be a great power in the land, uniting 250 millions of men and women in a bond which shall be indissoluble. The historical differences of national creeds will continue to exist like the different styles of architecture. The Christian church will not look in outward appearance like a Mahomedan mosque or an Aryan temple, but the differences of style and form will not interfere with the spiritual unity of purpose. When this is accomplished, another great idea, the union of all religions, which Raja Ram Mohan Roy cherished deeply in his heart, will be realised, and with it people in all lands will say with one voice 'Thy Kingdom has come and Heaven has descended on Earth.'

Since this address was first delivered there are evident signs of the awakening of thoughtful minds in all countries to the necessity of securing the co-operation of all nations towards this great end. And the best evidence of it was furnished by the great Parliament of Religions held at Chicago in connection with the great Columbian exposition, the smaller Unions among Christians themselves held at New York, U. S. A. and Paris, France,

this year. The great World's Temperance Union is a similar sign of the times. We may note also the fact that the missionaries from this country have been actively working both in America and in Europe to familiarise the people in those parts with the higher spiritualism of our ancient land. Also the Theosophical movement, which represents men who profess all the known religions and yet feel that they can co-operate together in this common elevation. All these indications may be regarded as the early dawn, which will before long usher in, in full blaze, the Sun of Righteousness and Glory which will unite all nations in a common brotherhood.

## THE CULTURAL INFLUENCES OF ISLAM<sup>1</sup>

SIR ABDUL QADIR, K.C.I.E.

Modern Indian civilization has developed from the action and reaction of so many different races and creeds upon each other that it is extremely difficult to say which of its features is due to a particular influence. Hardest of all to assess is the influence of Islam, for the various Muslim incursions into India brought comparatively few people of an alien race into India. Even the great Bābur, when he 'put his foot in the stirrup of resolution' and set out to invade India, in November, 1525, only took with him some 12,000 soldiers and merchants. Of the eighty odd million Muslims, who to-day form a quarter of the population, the great majority are descended from Hindu stock, and retain certain characteristics common to Indians as a whole. Yet because the Muslim invaders

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<sup>1</sup> This chapter is based on the Birdwood lecture, delivered by the author before the Royal Society of Arts, 13th Dec. 1935.

came as conquerors, rulers, and missionaries they made such an impression, especially in the north, that to many Europeans and Americans the characteristic life and architecture of India must seem to be Musulman. Muslim culture in India, being a blending of two civilizations, is something *sui generis*, and as such has its special contribution to make to the Western world, as well as to the rest of Islam. The process by which the blending took place is of special interest. A passage in the *Cambridge History of India*, by Sir John Marshall (vol. iii, p. 568), well describes the influence of Hindu and Muslim culture on one another. He observes:

‘Seldom in the history of mankind has the spectacle been witnessed of two civilizations, so vast and so strongly developed, yet so radically dissimilar, as the Muhammadan and the Hindu, meeting and mingling together. The very contrasts which existed between them, the wide divergence in their culture and their religions, make the history of their impact peculiarly instructive.’

The earliest contact of Islam with India began in the second half of the seventh and the beginning of the eighth centuries of the Christian era, through Sind and Baluchistan.

The Arabs, who conquered Sind and remained there, have left a lasting impress on the manners and customs of the people. Later on, another stream of Muslim people came to India, through its north-west frontier. They were racially and culturally different from the Arab invaders, who had come to the western coast. Representatives of various tribes and dynasties of Central Asia, who felt the spell of Islam and embraced the faith, started a long series of invasions of India. It is obvious, however, that invasions like those of Timūrlane or Mahmūd of Ghaznī were not calculated to produce marked cultural results or to leave many permanent traces of their influence. These contacts did not last long and offered no opportunities of any intimate relations between the people of the country and their unwelcome visitors from the north. The real contacts began when Muslims began to settle down in the country.

Several dynasties of Muslim kings preceded the establishment of the Mughal Empire in India, and undoubtedly contributed much to the grafting of Muslim culture on the ancient civilization of the country, but there is very little material available for making a definite estimate of their contribution. Attention has

to be confined mainly to the Mughal period, which has contributed most to the development of an Indo-Muslim culture.

Some of the influences which have come to India through Muslims may not have been essential ingredients of Islam when it originated in Arabia, but they came to be identified with it in course of time, in its onward march from Arabia to Persia and Central Asia. Of these countries Persia has had a dominating influence on Islam and through it on India. The Arabs conquered Persia, but Persian civilization made such a profound impression on them that the Persian language and literature became a necessary part of Islamic culture in many Eastern lands. The Central Asian dynasties, which came to India and established kingdoms in it, had come under the influence of Persian literature before they came to India, and the result was that Persian was adopted by them as the language of the Court and of literature. In the time of the Mughals the study of the Persian language was eagerly taken up by Muslims as well as non-Muslims. The Hindus, who possess a great capacity for adaptation in matters intellectual, took kindly to Persian literature, just as they are now eagerly studying the

English language and its literature. The Northern Provinces of India furnish many brilliant examples of Hindu scholars of Persian, who could use the language very effectively in prose as well as in poetry. Two classes of Hindus have particularly distinguished themselves in this respect—the Kashmīrī Pandits and the Kāyasthas. Recently a large book has been published containing selections from Persian poems composed by Kashmīrī Pandits. It was through the medium of Persian, which, in its turn, had been largely influenced by the Arabic language and the texts of the sacred books of the Muslim faith, that the best ethical thought of Islam influenced the educated Hindus of the period. One great result of this influence was the gradual prevalence of a widespread belief in the Unity of God and the growth of indigenous monotheistic faiths. The second remarkable result was the creation of a new indigenous language, called Urdu, which was a mixture of Persian and Hindi, and which has become, in course of time, the most commonly used language in India.

These two influences have had far-reaching effects in the past and are fraught with

great possibilities in the future. They require, therefore, to be discussed at some length. Other influences are too numerous to be noticed in detail, as they cover a very wide range. You see them in the style of buildings and houses, in music and painting, in arts and crafts, in dress and costume, in games and sports, in short, in the whole life of the country. We shall have to be content with passing references to these commemorations of a happy blending of two cultures, the streams of which decided, long ago, to take a common course.

Let us first consider religious thought. A large majority of educated people in India, even among non-Muslims, believe in one God, as the Creator and Preserver of the Universe, with no rivals and no equals. Though this belief is to be found in almost all the great religions of the world, in one form or another, it cannot be denied that no other faith has laid so much emphasis on it as Islam. We have to remember that the systems of belief prevailing among the Hindus at the time of the advent of the Muslims had largely drifted away from the original purity of the doctrines in their earliest sacred books, and various forms of idolatry had been substituted for

divine worship. Things have so changed now that, in spite of the fact that orthodox Hindus have still got idols in their temples, their attitude towards the worship of idols is very different from what it used to be. The intelligent and the educated among them declare that idols are only meant to serve as aids to concentration of thought, and that those who appear to worship them are, in reality, offering worship to Him to whom alone it is due. In this greatly changed attitude the influence of Islam can be easily traced, though in recent times the influence of Christianity has been another great force working against idolatry and superstition. It is also noteworthy that forces have sprung up inside Hinduism itself to combat the tendency to worship idols or to blindly follow designing priests. The Ārya Samāj, founded by the late Swāmī Dayānanda Sarasvatī in the Punjab, in the second half of the nineteenth century, may be mentioned as the most striking instance of the revolt of Hinduism against idol worship. This movement purports to be a revival of the ancient Vedic faith. Though it sometimes adopts a militant attitude towards Islam, in order to counteract its influence, it is significant that some of its

reforms run on lines parallel to the teachings of Islam. Besides condemning idol worship, it denounces priests, it allows the admission of people of other religions into the fold of the Aryan faith, and commends the marriage of widows.

Apart from these indications of Islamic notions, gradually and imperceptibly influencing the modes of religious thought in India, Islam has had a more direct influence in bringing into existence monotheistic systems of faith in India. The Sikh religion, founded by the saintly Guru Nānak, is a remarkable instance of this influence. This holy man believed in the Unity of God as strongly as any Muslim, and desired to smooth the differences between Hinduism and Islam. The *Granth Sāhib*, the sacred book of the Sikhs, bears testimony to the fact that the founder of the religion loved God and loved his fellow men and had great respect for the Prophet of Arabia and other holy men of Islam. A well-known Sikh gentleman, Sardār Umrāo Singh of Majlītha, has recently published a book which clearly shows that the essential beliefs of the Sikhs and the Moslems are very similar to one another. This book is a Persian translation of *Sukhmāni*, which is a part of the

sacred book of the Sikhs and every verse in it breathes the love of God. Sardār Umrāo Singh luckily lighted on the Persian manuscript of this book in the Bibliothéque Nationale of Paris and copied it. He took the copy to India and has taken great pains in comparing the translation with the original and editing it carefully. It is highly regrettable that, for want of sufficient knowledge and appreciation of each other's beliefs, the Sikhs and Muslims have drifted so far apart from one another.

Another great religious teacher who may be specifically mentioned in this connexion is Kabīr, the best exponent of what is known as the *Bhakti* movement. In the words of a recent writer this movement 'recognised no difference between Rām and Rahīm, Kaaba and Kailash, Qurān and Purān and inculcated that Karma is Dharmā. The preachers of this creed, Rāmānanda, Kabīr, Dādū, Rāmdās, Nānak, and Chaitanya, who flourished in different parts of India and preached the principles of Unity of God, were immensely influenced by Islam'.

In more recent times the religious movement that showed the strongest signs of Muslim influence is the Brāhma-Samāj, founded by

the late Raja Ram Mohan Roy and carried on and strengthened by the late Keshab Chandra Sen. Raja Ram Mohan Roy was a good scholar of Persian and very well versed in the literature of Islam. His study of English brought him into touch with Christian beliefs also, and he conceived the idea of an eclectic religion, combining the best points of the teachings of the Vedas, the Bible, and the Qurān, and holding all the great spiritual teachers of the world in equal veneration, as the best solution of the difficulties of India. The Brahmo-Samāj, as a strictly unitarian faith, shows the predominance of the most essential doctrine of Islam in its beliefs. This Samaj has included in its fold men of the highest intellectual calibre in our country, though, for obvious reasons, the number of its members has never been very large.

#### LANGUAGE, LITERATURE, AND ART

The Urdu language is another proof of the union of Hindu and Muslim cultures, though it is strange that there is a tendency in some quarters, to look upon it as something imported from outside, which might be got rid of as foreign to the soil. This mistaken view is due to want of sufficient information as to the origin of the language and its develop-

ment. It is gratifying to note a growing recognition of its value even in provinces where provincial languages are spoken. The following passage taken from an article by Mr. Anilehandra Banerjee on Indo-Persian literature and contributions made to it by the famous poet, Amīr Khusrū, of Delhi, embodies the opinion of a fair-minded Hindu writer as to the place of Urdu in the culture of our country. He says:

'Almost every work in Indo-Persian literature contains a large number of words of Indian origin, and thousands of Persian words became naturalized in every Indian vernacular language. This mingling of Persian, Arabic, and Turkish words and ideas with languages and concepts of Sanskritic origin is extremely interesting from the philological point of view, and this co-ordination of unknowns resulted in the origin of the beautiful Urdu language. That language in itself symbolized the reconciliation of the hitherto irreconcilable and mutually hostile types of civilization represented by Hinduism and Islam.'

The language thus developed by the combined efforts of Hindus and Muslims now boasts of a fairly varied and wide literature, which may be claimed as a 'common heritage'

by both, and is gaining every day in importance and strength.

Urdu literature is rich in poetry. It must be admitted, however, that Urdu poetry has been considerably restricted in its scope in the past and it is only recently that efforts have been made to widen its sphere. The most popular form of versification in Urdu was the *ghazal*, consisting of stray thoughts on such subjects as love, beauty, and morality. Each line was in the same metre, and the endings of each line rhymed with one another. This style of writing has found numerous votaries among Muslims as well as Hindus. In the collections of the *ghazals* of many of our eminent writers you can find literary gems bearing comparison with some of the best pieces of literature in other languages, though for the bulk of this kind of verse no merit can be claimed. Hence it was that some of the poets of the second half of the nineteenth century who realized the limitations of the *ghazal* and its shortcomings felt the need of literary reform. In Delhi, Ghālib was the first to realize this, but it fell to the share of his distinguished pupil, Hāli, to inaugurate the reform. He started a new school of Urdu 'poetry', which has had many

adherents among his contemporaries and successors. In Lucknow a departure from the ordinary style of poetry was introduced by two great poets, Anīs and Dabīr, who wrote *marsiyyas*, or elegies, about the martyrdom of Imām Husain. Anīs and Dabīr vastly enriched the store of Urdu literature and greatly refined and polished the Urdu language. It is very interesting to note that these two eminent literary men were not only great as writers, but were equally remarkable for the wonderful effect they could produce by giving public readings of their works. They made reading an art, which has since been imitated, but has not so far been excelled in India. Large gatherings of people of all classes, Muslims and Hindus, used to assemble to hear their recitations, and this brought about a cultural *entente* between the two, which still exists. A noteworthy influence of this form of literature was an adoption of the style of the *marsiyyas* by distinguished Hindu writers for depicting the charming story of the Rāmā�ana, concerning the sacrifices made by the heroic Rāma in the performance of his pious filial duty and the unselfish love of Lakshman, his brother, and of Sītā, his wife. Munshī Jawāla Pershād (*Barg*) and Pandit

Brij Narayān (*Chakbast*) are among the Hindu writers who have effectively used the style originated by the two great masters of *marsiya* writing.

This reference to the Lucknow school of Urdu literature will not be complete without a brief mention of the famous *Fisana-i-Azad*, a remarkable work of fiction in Urdu, written by the late Pandit Ratan Nāth (*Sarshar*), who holds a unique position among the writers of Urdu prose. He has given graphic pictures of the life of the rich as well as the poor in Lucknow. In this book of his, as well as in many of his other works, the influence of Muslim literature, which he had read widely, is clearly visible.

Among the literary institutions popularized by the Muslims may be mentioned the *Mushaira*, which means a symposium or a meeting for a poetical contest. This contest is ordinarily held in order to judge who excels in writing a *Ghazal* in a given metre. The poets joining the *Mushaira* all recite their respective compositions. It is not customary in high-class *Mushairas* for the meeting or its chairman to declare who wins the laurels of the day, but in most cases the audience is not left in doubt as to the merits of the best poem,

the indication of opinion being given by the loud applause of the listeners or by expressions of approbation uttered in the course of the recitations by those in a position to judge. This institution, though not enjoying the vogue which it did in days gone by, is still fairly popular and often brings together people of different classes and communities, who manage to forget their differences for the time being, in their admiration for a common literature.

A separate chapter in this book—"Legacy of India" (Oxford 1939)—has dealt with Muhammadan architecture. Of all branches of art this has always appealed most strongly to Muslims. One reason is that painting of human beings and animals was discouraged on religious grounds during the first period of proselytism and of Islamic expansion, and the tradition survived for many centuries afterwards. In India the building of mosques, tombs, and palaces was the most characteristic activity of the early Muslim rulers. This allowed great scope both to those artists who came from other parts of Asia, and also to the indigenous craftsmen who worked under Muslim inspiration and orders. They found vent for their artistic genius in

drawing beautiful mural designs in letters and figures, and cultivating symmetry and proportion in buildings. Mausoleums and mosques thus became an inspiration to artists in every form of art. They came from every part of the country to take sketches of these buildings. Floral designs adorning the walls of these structures have been copied for embroidery and textile work. It would be impossible to estimate the immense educative value of these buildings in forming and developing the tastes, the standards of craftsmanship, and the imaginative scope of millions of Indians all over northern India, Bengal, and the Deccan. The structure of Indian society tends to make artistic production dependent upon the continuous patronage of rulers and of the very wealthy. This patronage the Mughals, and, to a far lesser extent, the earlier Muslim rulers, were able to provide. They brought not only new ideas, but also a new urge to produce. A modern writer, Mr. Ja'far, in his *History of the Mughal Empire*, has laid great stress upon the influence which the Emperors exerted on their courtiers, and through them on the rest of India.

'Babur displayed a remarkable taste for painting. He is said to have brought to India

with him all the choicest specimens of painting he could collect from the library of his forefathers, the Timurides. Some of these were taken to Persia by Nādir Shāh after his invasion of India and the conquest of Delhi, but as long as they remained in India they exerted a great influence on and gave a new impetus to the art of painting in India.'

As we know, Bābur did not live long enough to carry out his schemes for the development of India. His somewhat unfortunate son, Humāyūn, also had an unsettled reign. It was left to Babūr's grandson, Akbar, to bring to perfection the love of art which he had inherited. He proved a great patron of art in all its branches. According to Abul Fazl, the well-known Minister of Akbar, the Emperor had more than a hundred *Karkhanajat* (i. e., workshops of arts and crafts) attached to the royal household, each like a city. (See *Ain-i-Akbari*-Text 9). Interesting details about these institutions have been collected by a modern writer, Mr. Abdul Azīz, in his remarkable book on the reign of Akbar's grandson, Shāhjahān.<sup>1</sup> I am indebted to this book for the following extract from an old historical

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<sup>1</sup> History of the Reign of Shahjahān. It is being published serially in the *Journal of Indian History*.

work of Father Monserrate, who was at the Court of Akbar in 1580-2. He writes:

'He has built a workshop near the palace, where also are studios and workrooms for the finer and more reputable arts, such as painting, goldsmith work, tapestry making, carpet and curtain making, and the manufacture of arms. Hither he very frequently comes and relaxes his mind with watching at their work those who practise these arts.'

The lead given by Akbar in the patronage of art was followed by his son, Jahāngīr, who was himself fond of painting. Shāhjahān was also artistic, and his personal interest encouraged his courtiers to imitate him and thus his influence further filtered down to those who came in contact with them. This tendency was particularly strong among the nobility of the Mughal Court. Mr. Abdul Aziz, writing about this tendency in the book above mentioned, observes:

'The Mughal nobility constituted a sort of agency through which the ideals of art and morals and manners were diffused among the lower classes....The habits and customs of the people, their ideas, tendencies, and ambitions, their tastes and pleasures, were often unconsciously fashioned on this model. The peerage

acted as the conduitpipe for this stream of influence. The patronage of art and culture followed the same lines; and even where the interest was not genuine the enlightened pursuits were followed and encouraged as a dogma dictated by fashion.'

The merits of the paintings done under Muslim patronage during the Mughal period have been the subject of several monographs. Their value as an aid to history has been discussed in a lecture, given by the late Sir Thomas Arnold, before the Royal Society of Arts. There are considerable numbers of admirable miniatures in various European collections. The India Office in London, the British Museum, and the Bodleian at Oxford have many rare and beautiful specimens of an art which has hardly been properly appreciated by the Western world. We give two specimens of this delicate and wholly delightful work.

Closely allied to the art of painting is the art of illuminating books. This found great encouragement under the influence of Islam in India. Muslims, who could afford to do so, liked to adorn manuscripts of the Qurān and other books of religion or classic literature with gold borders on every page and to have

the bindings of books adorned with gold. The taste for possessing such books was shared by their Hindu countrymen. Artists of both communities derived amusement as well as profit from illuminating books of Arabic, Sanskrit and Persian.

Calligraphy, or the art of writing a beautiful hand, was also very widely cultivated, and though a good many people adopted it to earn a livelihood, there was a sufficient number of well-to-do people who practised it as a relaxation from other pursuits, and liked to copy in an attractive form the books they wished to treasure. It is recorded that the Emperor Aurangzib was not only an accomplished master of this art, but that he used to earn a livelihood by making copies of the Qurān and offering them for sale, as he did not like to spend the money of the State on his personal requirements.

In connexion with the subject of manuscripts, it may be mentioned that paper was brought into India by Muslims. This was a very material contribution to the advancement of learning. It appears that originally the manufacture of paper came to Central Asia from China. There was a great manufactory of it in Samarcand and it was

from there that paper came to India about the tenth century A. D.

We may now consider the contribution made by Muslims to another branch of art, i.e. music. As observed by Mr. Ja'far, in his *History of the Mughal Empire*, 'Indian music, like other fine arts, proved a new channel of intercourse between the Hindus and Mussulmans. The process of co-operation and intermutation was not a new thing in the time of Akbar. It had begun centuries before. In the domain of music it became distinctly perceptible how the two communities were borrowing from each other the precious share they possessed in this art, and thereby enriching each other. *Khiyal*, for example, which was invented by Sultan Husain Shah (*Sharqi*) of Polpur, has become an important limb of Hindu music. *Dhrupod*, on the other hand, has engrafted itself on Muslim music.'

Abul Fazl tells us that Akbar paid much attention to music and patronized those who practised this art.

It is significant that though in the beginning of Islam this branch of art had also been discouraged like painting, yet the contact of Islam with Persia brought about a change in the attitude of Muslims towards it, particularly

under the influence of *Sufis*, or Muslim mystics, who believed in the efficacy of music as a means of elevating the soul and as an aid to spiritual progress. This attitude became more pronounced when Muslims settling in India found that their Hindu countrymen were fond of music and made use of it in their religious ceremonies. The result was that though Divine worship in mosques continued to be performed on the rigid lines of orthodox Islam, without any extraneous aids of singing or playing on musical instruments, music became quite popular among Muslims in India. The fondness of the rich for it made it a favourite amusement, so that it was customary to have musical performances on all festive occasions. The liking which the *Sufis* had for music started the custom of semi-religious congregations assembling to hear songs of divine love sung by professional singers. This class of musicians is known as *Qawwals* and the tunes which they sing are called *Qawwali* and are very popular.

A number of new musical instruments were either introduced by Muslims or were given Persian names, after some modifications in their appearance. Instruments like *Rabab*, *Sarod*, *Taus*, *Dilruba*, are instances in point.

The Mughal gardens of northern India are almost as well known in Europe as Mughal buildings. Centuries earlier the Arabs had introduced into southern Spain the idea of the well-ordered garden, as a place in which to find repose, beauty, recreation, and protection from the heat of the day. Water, preferably flowing, was an essential feature, not only to irrigate plants and shrubs, but to bring coolness, and in the plains to bring the illusion of the mountain streams. These would call back memories of their original homes to the Mughals as much as they did to the expatriated moors. The rediscovery in Northern India of these rather formalized gardens undoubtedly had an influence upon Italy and England.

The Mughals had undoubtedly a great feeling for natural beauty, and a certain nostalgia afflicted them in the dry arid plains of the Punjab, before the days when widespread irrigation had done something to relieve its monotony. At times they eagerly went to distant places in search of natural beauty, incurring great trouble and expense in doing so, at other times they incurred even more trouble and expense in bringing beauty to places where it did not exist before.

It is interesting to read in the letters of Abul Fazl an account of the journeys of the Emperor Akbar from Agra to Kashmir, to enjoy the wonderful scenery and climate of that beautiful valley. We are told that he used to go there for the summer, attended by his courtiers and troops, and used to take a new route every time, so that sappers and miners had to go before him making roads where no roads existed. His son, Jahāngīr, kept up this practice and was as fond of the beauties of Kashmir as his father. The famous garden, known as Shālamār, in Kashmir, still exists as a thing of beauty and a joy for ever, and contributes to the pleasure of thousands of visitors every year. So does the other equally beautiful garden there, called the *Nishat*. The journeys to Kashmir are thus instances of Muslim kings going to the beauty spots of India, while the creation of a Shālamār garden in Lahore illustrates their enterprise in bringing to the plains of India the beauties of Kashmir. This garden is, to this day, one of the great sights of Lahore. The stages into which the garden at Srinagar (in Kashmir) is divided were made possible by the natural situation of the site chosen for it. It was at the foot of a moun-

tain and water gushing down from the hillside flowed into the garden and enriched its soil. The natural ups and downs of the locality easily lent themselves to being shaped as stages of the garden. At Lahore, however, the garden was divided into three stages by artificial means, which added very much to the difficulty of the task. There was no water available near the site chosen for it and it had to be brought by means of a canal, but still the beauties of the garden in Kashmir were reproduced in the heart of the Punjab. I have specifically mentioned these gardens to illustrate the point that the love of gardening displayed by so many Moslem kings in India was a valuable cultural influence and has left a lasting impression on the taste of the well-to-do classes in India, Hindus as well as Muslims. This taste has now had a further stimulus with the advent of the English, who are behind no other people in their love of gardens.

The Emperor Jahāngīr was specially keen on horticulture, and was fond of gaining knowledge and collecting information about trees, plants, and flowers. In his time he imported many new trees and plants into India. A part of Lahore which is known as

the, *Badami Bagh* was full of almond trees which were successfully planted there. In the private collection of paintings I have seen an old book, containing hand-painted illustrations of leaves of trees and fruit-plants, indigenous as well as imported, which was prepared in Jahāngīr's time and, presumably, at his instance.

The beauty and tranquillity of the Mughal gardens undoubtedly struck the imagination of contemporary scholars and travellers, as well as of the Indians in whose midst they were placed. They provided a new conception of life and its aims which influenced literature both in India and in Europe. There are poems in Indo-Persian literature as well as in Urdū, which were professedly inspired by the gardens in Kashmir and Lahore. Our distinguished Indian poet, Iqbāl (or to give him his full name, Dr. Sir Muhammad Iqbāl) has several exquisite poems in Persian, which were inspired by a visit to Srinagar. - A famous couplet in Persian, improvised by a Mughal princess, owed its inspiration to the sight of the beautiful waterfall which adorns the centre of the Shālamār at Lahore. She was watching with admiration the sparkling water of the *Abshar* falling on the slope of

the marble, which constituted the artificial fall, and was listening to the sound so produced, when the following improvised song came to her lips:

Ai Abshar nauha gar az bahr-i-kisti.  
 Sar dar nigen figanda zi andoh-i-kisti.  
 Aya chi dard bud ki chun ma tamam shab  
 Sar ra ba sang mi zadi o mi giristi.

It is not possible to bring out in translation the beauty of the original, but the words may be freely translated as follows:

Whose absence, O Waterfall, art thou lamenting  
 so loudly,  
 Why hast thou cast down thy head in grief?  
 How acute was thy pain, that throughout the  
 night,  
 Restless, like me, thou wast striking thy head  
 against the stone and shedding tears profusely!

So far we have dealt chiefly with the amenities of life, but the Mughals also brought new ideas of administration into India. Many of these, like the land revenue system, have been absorbed into the ordinary government of the country under British rule. Although much of the Mughal administration had collapsed before the battle of Plassey, there were the rudiments of a postal system, and the Muslims had made roads, dug irrigation canals, and encouraged gardening from well-water. They had covered the land with

*Karavan serais*, and almost certainly made it easier for Indian or European to travel in India. They had established a rule of law, which was in many ways more humane than that administered in contemporary Europe. The death sentence, which was inflicted for theft in contemporary England, was reserved for far more serious offences under the Mughal administration in India. There is abundant evidence to show that the Bengalis, in the latter half of the eighteenth century, found Muhammadan criminal law much easier to understand than the uncodified and exotic law which was enforced by the English High Court. A famous passage from Macaulay describes the devastating effect of the introduction of the new system. The merits of Muhammadan law have been fully recognized by colonial administrators in Africa.

There is some question as to how far the Mughals initiated and how far they merely adapted the elaborate court ceremonial and etiquette which so struck many travellers. From Milton onwards there are numberless references to this side of Mughal civilization. It is possible that the Mughals, like the English who followed them, believed in the psychological effect of this pomp upon the

popular mind. It may be open to doubt whether this impressive show of power and wealth was really conducive to any development of culture. I must say, however, that these spectacles have an irresistible hold on the imagination of the people, and even countries boasting of the highest modern civilization cannot do without them. A peculiar feature of a Darbar in India was that poets used to come and recite *Qasidas*, or panegyrics, praising the ruler presiding over the function, and used to be rewarded for doing so. This custom is not forgotten yet and prevails in Indian States and to a smaller extent in British territory, where *Qasidas* are sometimes read in honour of Governors and Viceroys. These poems are not always of a very high order from a literary point of view, but there are instances of *Qasidas* possessing real literary merit having been presented on such occasions.

The libraries that came into existence in India, as a result of the love of learning of many of its Muslim rulers, had a great influence on Indian culture. It was not only kings and princes who collected rich stores of literature for their enlightenment, but noblemen of all classes vied with one another in owning

such collections. Of the Mughal kings, Humayun was very fond of his books and the stone building that housed his library still stands in Delhi. It was from its narrow stairs that Humayun fell when he died. Among the Mughal princes, Dārā Shikoh, the eldest son of Shāhjahān, a scholarly and broad-minded prince, was a great lover of books and left behind a large library, the building of which survived for a long time and the site of which is still pointed out. The ruin that followed the terrible period of the Mutiny of 1857 swept away most of these stores of literature. A few private collections of that period may still be found in some ancient families in India or in Indian States, but thousands of valuable books were lost or destroyed or sold cheap by those who got them as loot. A large number of them have travelled west and are fortunately preserved in the libraries of Europe. Among these may be found manuscripts bearing the seals or signatures of Muslim kings and noblemen who owned them. They furnish a silent but eloquent testimony to the culture of days gone by, when in the absence of modern facilities for propagation of literature and for the multiplication of books, human patience endured great hardships to preserve for posterity the best thoughts of the learned men of antiquity.

## DEMOCRACY THROUGH INDIAN EYES \*

THE RT. HON'BLE V. S. SRINIVASA SASTRI,  
P.C., C.H., LL.D.

We live under democratic institutions of the British type, which are now discredited in various parts of the civilized world. Even among us, who belong to the British Commonwealth, large sections of the people, perhaps growing steadily in number, are of the opinion that democracy is played out, and that in clinging to it we run the risk of being left behind in the international race. This may or may not be true. I am inclined to think that the day of democracy is not yet done, and that, if its champions would only take pains to remove its weaknesses and reinforce its strong points, it might still maintain its ground as the most beneficent form of human government yet evolved. Unfortunately, democracy's friends do not stop to discriminate; they take always the easy path to

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\* From the Convocation Address delivered in Annamalai University in December 1937.

success and forget that, in certain high aspects of political action, the means are as important as the ends. It thus happens that in this country, with every widening of the franchise and of the sphere of popular control, the corruptions of western democracy obtain a foothold sooner than its virtues. Criticism of the methods adopted by our leaders is not necessarily to be suspected as proceeding from a believer in autocracy, but ought rather to be welcomed as the attempt of a patriot who cherishes with affection the political institutions of his country and would fain see them cleansed of imperfections and brought to a higher pitch of purity and public serviceableness. In this spirit and not in that of cavil on the one hand or of fervid other-worldliness on the other, I propose to point out one of the dangers which threaten to strangle our public life.

The malady I shall deal with is the hypertrophy of the party system. It is established beyond question that parliamentary government postulates the existence of well-organized and coherent parties. The conditions for their proper functioning must be secured beyond all hazard. Politicians who wish to do their bit for the community must submit

to a certain amount of control and restriction of the free exercise of their judgement. This being premised, I am concerned here to dwell at some length on the other side of the picture. There are great evils attendant on the system some of them apparent, but others insidious in their nature and demanding the utmost vigilance on the part of leaders lest they choke the atmosphere of purity and regard for the welfare of the whole which is so essential to the success of popular institutions. Writers on political subjects usually point out that the great antinomy is between the freedom of the individual and the exaltation of the State, whether the individual exists only as an instrument of the welfare of the State, or the State is in the last resort to be judged by the degree in which it secures the freedom and the welfare of the individual. It is by no means easy to decide between these alternatives, but as one who is always on the quest of the golden mean, I should like to believe that except in very rare situations it is possible for the State and the individual to sustain and subserve each other. The actual antinomy, however, that faces us is, the party or the individual citizen? One can understand the nation demanding the entire surrender of

the citizen, his prospect, his freedom and his life. Can a party push its claims against its members quite so far? Perhaps the claim is not made in set formulae or stated nakedly in any treatise on public institutions; but in actual practice, the tendency of party executives is to aggrandize themselves and make continual inroads on the freedom of action and of speech of their members. As in other cases, the evil example of one party spreads among all. The reins of party discipline tend to be held with increasing rigour, and men and women are told that non-compliance with the fiats of party leaders will be noted in black ink in their records. In the hurry of life we do not remember that by merely joining a party we give up a considerable slice of liberty. With the vast range of activity now assumed by Government and semigovernmental organisations there is little in the normal life of a citizen which may not at one time or another become the subject of regulation; and a political party therefore, in the search for means of extending its power and prestige, is almost omnivorous. It soon acquires a body of crystallised views upon all subjects under the sun, and a member may be called upon at any time to support them by

advocacy and by vote. It is inconceivable that the party views on all or most of these subjects could be his own personal views. Such genuine conformity is not possible in more than a few subjects. The theoretical distinction between fundamentals and details, between principles and their particular applications, is apt to be lost sight of; and in the fervour of propaganda and the excitement of combat the word of the party leader must be obeyed, and the tyranny of military discipline tends to be established. In a system of ins and outs the whole power and authority of Government are the stake for which the parties contend with one another, and the prospect of such a prize magnifies all trifling details in the campaign and makes the maintenance of discipline in all ranks a paramount consideration. The Opposition, whose business ought to be to expose the flaws of Government measures, but, when that task is done, to examine the measures on their merits and support them where they are worthy of support, opposes for the sake of opposition and gets into the habit of seeing nothing right in the operations of Government and never saying a good word of its adversaries. This may be good "strategy", but it affords no exercise in

the art of political judgement, which after all consists in the ability to sift public issues, separate the good and bad in them and advance the one while checking the other. How can a tyro in political science educate himself by a study of the speeches and actions of those who have hopelessly narrowed their vision and made up their minds to view all matters only as they affect themselves? Speaking to the alumni of a University, I may not forget the needs of beginners and the duty of elders so to conduct themselves in the political sphere as well as in other spheres that their thought, speech and deed may accord with one another and teach the lesson that all life is one and must be lived in close conformity with one's nature and inmost convictions. It is impossible to be a bondsman in politics and a free man in other departments of life.

It is amazing how the men who sit at the headquarters of political organisations claim the right to control and guide our private friendships and social relations. The barriers that divide parties one from another are held inviolable as though they were ordained of heaven and could only be crossed under penalty of excommunication. You are admonished which socials you may attend

with impunity and which you must avoid. Deep differences of views on public affairs and the habit of meeting on different platforms naturally part people into groups, and each person may be trusted to avoid contacts which may expose him to misunderstanding or impair his reputation for fidelity. Why need we add to these natural restraints special prohibitions directed against individuals or classes? It is no good reminding us that, in periods of abnormal excitement like that which saw the Irish Home Rule bills of Gladstone, social intercourse between members of the opposed parties is apt to be at a minimum and even friendships may suffer suspension as during a civil war. This is an aberration not to be cited as a precedent for normal times. I have never been able to perceive sufficient justification in India for the boycott of social functions at which officials are present, whether as hosts or as guests. It arises from morbid political animosity, to which I have ever been a stranger. One would think, on the contrary, that men and women were meant to mix easily and naturally with one another and that, where differing political tendencies might keep them apart, special occasions of "social" intercourse should

be created for the purpose of bringing them together and thus bearing witness to their common nature.

How true it is that the appetite for power grows by what it feeds on! Put a man at a table with some stationery and call him the secretary of a bureau. He will start by making enquiries which will soon become inquisitions, by making suggestions which will rapidly assume the character of orders, and by formulating principles which will steadily harden into a creed. He sends out whips on all occasions and sundry, and you have to make a speech or hold your tongue, to attend or stay away, and to walk to the right or to the left as you may be bidden. One may readily grant that members of a party must submit to certain regulations in order that concerted action may be calculable. What is objectionable and must be resisted is the ceaseless encroachment of the executive upon the freedom of the individual until he becomes a mere unit in a well-drilled regiment. The unreality of proceedings in which men and women do not care to form their own opinions or, when they have them, do not care to express them, is so great that one hesitates to accept the decisions arrived at in

such conditions as expressions of the national will entitled to respect and obedience. T. H. Huxley was once asked why he did not care to enter the House of Commons: his answer was that he had dedicated his life to the discovery and elucidation of truth and not to its obscuration, and therefore he avoided the pursuit of politics. I do not think that Huxley overstated his case. (Party politics, which forbids independent judgement and compels one to speak and vote at another's bidding, is systematized violence done to truth) This confession must sound strange, coming from one who a few moments ago granted the proposition that the party system and therefore party discipline are essential to the success of democratic institutions, and who is himself a lifelong practitioner of the game. Knowing how commonly one is misunderstood, let me at this point repeat my faith in democracy. However bad a legislative chamber may be, as Cavour said, it can never be so bad as the antechamber of an autocrat or, one may add, of a modern dictator. But does it follow that I should join in the apotheosis of party and kneel down before a caucus which regards its slogans as mantras at a ritual and shouts hosannas at every paltry

success as though the hosts of heaven had routed the hordes of hell?

It has been pointed out that the function of political parties is akin to that of lawyers who argue a case before the jury from opposite sides, the general public being the final deciding authority. Avowedly then a party is only one of two or more similar agencies meant to check and complement one another for the discovery of the line of best advantage to the community. For any one of these to claim the monopoly of power or influence and to demand the entire allegiance of the people is in the nature of a usurpation. It ought to be clearly understood that in a legislature, for instance, the party in power will only then be doing its duty when it pays due regard to the views of the other elements that compose the House, appropriates the best thoughts and suggestions put forward by them and enacts into law the combined wisdom of the people's representatives. If it were possible to rid our minds of the competitive aspect of the labours of the various parties, they would seem to be co-ordinate and co-operating agencies employed on the common task of ascertaining and promoting the good of the whole community.

A party is subordinate to the nation, must be ready to sacrifice its interests for those of the nation, and ought not to claim of the citizen that complete abnegation that only the nation can claim in sore need. On this view how grievously at fault we are in carrying on a ceaseless mutual warfare, on the look-out for ambushes, feints and fights to the finish! If the great religions are to practise the virtues of charity, tolerance and even appreciation towards one another, if races and nations are bidden, in the name of mankind, to pull down all tariff and political barriers, how paltry and childlike seem the squabbles and truceless hostilities of our parties, often with no intelligible distinction and revolving round personalities!

I am under command to exhort you, the graduates of the year, to conduct yourselves suitably unto the position to which, by the degrees conferred upon you to-day, you have attained. Your position is that of those who are entering on the rights and duties of citizenship. I advise you to be faithful to party, but always to put the nation above it. I advise you, when you become leaders, to circumscribe within well-defined limits the jurisdiction of your party, to demand of your

followers due respect for this jurisdiction, but scrupulously to allow them full discretion outside that jurisdiction. I advise you not to look upon members of other parties as enemies to be avoided, denounced and injured, but as fellow-travellers choosing different routes to reach the same goal, viz., the common good. I advise you, above all, to cherish your personal freedom as a birthright and guard it jealously except in a limited sphere, so that in your public activities you may be true to yourselves. The ideal to be aimed at is the one enunciated in our ancient saying

मनस्येकं वचस्येकं कर्मण्येकं महात्मनाम् ।

manasyekam vacasyekam

karmaṇyekam mahātmanām.

“One and the same in thought, word and act.” To propagate others’ opinions as your own, to make speeches against your convictions and to vote habitually at the bidding of a whip, is to do violence to truth. In this land men have been bidden from ancient days to speak the truth and to perform the dharma. सत्यं वद। धर्मं चर। satyam vada; dharmaṁ cara. Speak the truth; do the right. Truth has been declared to be the foundation and the support of all things. सत्ये सर्वं प्रतिष्ठितम् । satye sarvam pratishthitam. In an immortal

legend Hariscandra sold his wife and son to slavery and himself watched corpses burning on Ganga's bank, to avoid framing a falsehood between his lips. To keep the plighted word of his father Rama gave up a kingdom and dwelt in the forest for years with his wife. The empire of Truth has no limits and knows no relaxations. Modern life, however, has made numerous and extensive inroads upon it. In the dealings of nations, whether in war or peace or ordinary diplomatic intercourse; in the flattery that pervades palaces; in the large sphere allotted to propaganda and advertisement; in the region of sex; in commerce and business; in testimonials; in postprandial utterances; in obituary orations and epitaphs; in dealings with invalids and children; in the promises made by lovers and by candidates at election time; in the writings of the partisan press; in the one-sided pleadings before judges; in the chronicles of courts and kings and queens; in the defence of superstition and error as a necessary basis for ethical conduct; in these and several other departments we recognise and allow for a large measure of concealment and distortion of the truth. Shall we knowingly and deliberately add the enormous domain of politics to this formidable list?

Happily we are not left without some shining examples for our guidance. One that will be universally admitted is Mahatma Gandhi. It is not for nothing that he observes silence on one day of each week, for all speech involves a certain impairment of the truth. He employs the fewest words and the simplest to express his thoughts, for does not the poet say that those must be frugal in their words who wish to be truthful? I know of none who is so preternaturally careful to avoid situations that might compromise or weaken his adherence to the truth. With a will that no bribe can buy and no threat can bend, he upholds the supremacy of his conscience. Dedicated body and soul to the service of mankind, he will seek no good, however great or glittering, except by methods wholly consonant with his own conception of right or truth. *Daridranarayana* as he proclaims himself, four annas is not beyond his means; if still he stands outside the Congress organisation, it is because its atmosphere irks his extremely sensitive and truthful soul. He protests against people following him blindly and accepting his decisions without endeavouring to make them their own. Yet, so weak is human nature that in the wide circle of his

influence people too readily surrender their individual freedom and so palter with truth. If one of the phases of truth be non-violence, another is the integrity of the human soul. The Mahatma's supreme merit is his unflinching devotion to the goddess of Truth in her various phases. Let us be his co-worshippers, not his worshippers.



## NOTES

### 1.—THE PEACEFUL PLOUGH

BIRDWOOD, Sir George Christopher Molesworth, M. D., of Edinburgh University, K.C.S.I., a medical officer of the Bombay army. In 1857 he was appointed Professor of Anatomy and Physiology in Grant Medical College, and until his leaving India, he continued in chairs of Anatomy, Physiology, Botany, and Materia Medica. He was appointed Curator of the Government Central Museum at Bombay, and with the assistance of Dr. Bhau Dajee, he established the Victoria and Albert Museum and the Victoria Gardens in Bombay. He was honorary secretary of the Royal Asiatic Society of Bombay. In 1869 he left India, but in England he remained an active friend of India through a long life.

He devoted himself to writing on Indian subjects and he brought to his work rare insight, devotion and knowledge. His scholarship, whether of eastern or of western literature, is amazing. Over his pages he sheds the atmosphere of a rich and allusive style. He has written many books, but amongst them all "Sva" stands unique as his most characteristic product.

The present selection is from an essay in "Sva", called "The Mahratta Plough", one of the most highly valued of Birdwood's writings and "a classic revelation of intimate and discerning acquaintance with the simple life of the Indian Cultivator."

*Hesiod, Virgil, etc.:* The ancient Romans were devoted to agriculture and were attentive to every part of husbandry as appears from the writers on that subject (and every poet wrote on agriculture): Hesiod, Cato, Varro, Virgil, Pliny, Columella, etc. The most illustrious commanders were sometimes called from the plough.

*Scriptores Rei Rusticae, Veteres Latini:* (Literally) writers on agriculture, being ancient Latins.

*Tusser*: (1524-80) English agricultural writer and poet, author of "Hundreth good pointes of husbandrie."

*Bhavani*: or Durga, wife of Siva, in one of her many characters. She is similar to Athene as the inventor of the plough, who had taught men to attach oxen to the yoke.

*Pingue solum lassat, etc.*: That which tires the body alone, that same labour renews (the man).

*Totem*: A totem is a class of natural phenomena or material objects—most commonly a species of animals or plants, between which and himself the savage believes a certain ultimate relation to exist. Whatever the relation may be, it generally leads the savage to abstain from killing or eating his *totem*, if his *totem* happens to be a species of animals or plants.

*Gondwana*: The territories in Central India once occupied by the Gond tribes.

*Hermes*: In one of his many characters Hermes is the god of winds. 'Pan', an Arcadian god of hills and woods, is son of Hermes by a nymph.

*Sahyadris*: The mountain range usually known as the Western Ghats.

*The vocal cloud of dust—Eleusis—Salamis*: Herodotus in his "History" (Book VIII) narrates a tale told by one Dicaeus of how "he saw a cloud of dust advancing from Eleusis such as a host of thirty thousand men raise." "They looked, and saw the dust, from which the sound arose, become a cloud, and the cloud rise up into the air and sail away to Salamis, making for the station of the Grecian fleet. Then they knew that it was the fleet of Xerxes which would suffer destruction."

The famous "Battle of Salamis" was fought between the Greeks and Persians in 480 B.C. In the end the Persian fleet was destroyed.

*Eleusis*: In ancient geography, a city twelve miles from Athens, the seat of worship of Demeter and of the 'Eleusinian mysteries.' The events celebrated were the descent of Persephone into the underworld and her return to the light of day and her mother. There were two festivals, the greater and the less. They were intended to confirm, in the minds of the "initiated" the faith in life after death and a system of rewards and punishments.

*Propertian epigram*: Roman poet. Propertius (born in Umbria, 49 B.C.) is famous for his epigrams.

*Nauta de stellis, etc.*: The sailor (knows) the stars, the cultivator the cattle.

*That after, no repenting draws*: From Milton's Sonnet "To Cyriack Skinner."

*Dark backward, and abysm of time*: From Shakespeare's "The Tempest" Act I, Sc. ii.

*Civitas Dei*: God's own community.

*Apples of Sodom*: Sodom is a former city of Palestine in the vicinity of the Dead Sea. "There are apple-trees on the sides of the Dead Sea, which bear lovely fruit, but within are full of ashes."

*The Nibelungs' gold*: An expression used to denote a hoard that one never enjoys. The 'Nibelungs' or 'Nibelungers' were the possessors of the wonderful "Hoard" of gold and precious stones guarded by the dwarf Alberich. Their name passed to later holders of the Hoard. Hagen and Gunther, the latest owners of the treasure, buried it in the Rhine, intending later to enjoy it; but they were both slain for refusing to reveal its whereabouts, and the Hoard remains for ever in the keeping of the Rhine maidens.

## 2.—VIKRAMA AND URVASI

**MRS. MANNING**: Mrs. Charlotte Manning was first Mrs. Speir, wife of an Indian officer. She wrote *Life in Ancient India*, 1856. In this she was aided by Prof. H. H. Wilson. Her *Ancient and Mediaeval India* came out in 1869. Mrs. Manning's work will probably long and deservedly remain a standard hand-book on the literature, arts, and sciences of Ancient India. She died in 1871. (From *National Biographies*, Royal Asiatic Society Library.)

*Dakava*: (or Dasyu) Enemies of gods, a class of mythological giants. In the epic period they were probably personifications of the aborigines of India.

*Naimisha sacrifice*: Sacrifice performed in the Naimisha forest.

3.—NATURAL RELIGION IN INDIA

**LYALL**, Sir Alfred Comyn (1835-1911) had a distinguished career in the Indian Civil Service, and became Lieutenant-Governor of the North-West Province and Member of the India Council in London. He had a profound insight into the spiritual nature of the Oriental mind. His *Asiatic Studies* are instinct with a knowledge of Indian sentiment and imagination. *Natural Religion in India* is his "Rede Lecture" at Cambridge (1891), reprinted in "Asiatic Studies : Second Series."

(Author's Synopsis of the essay: Natural Religion as exemplified by Hinduism—Meanings of the term Hindu—Hinduism apart from the three Historical Religions of the world—Development of natural with supernatural beliefs—Belief in the soul's survival—Deification of humanity—Propitiation—Ritual—Pantheism—Final liberation of illusions—Recognition of Divine Unity).

**200 Millions of Hindus:** Now about 300 millions.

**Sufi:** Mohammedan pantheistic mystic. The 'sufi' endeavours to gain insight into the Divine Being through ecstasy and contemplation.

**Bishop Butler** (1692-1752): English divine, bishop of Durham. In 1763 he published his *Analogy of Religion, Natural and Revealed, to the Course and Constitution of Nature*. In Butler 'Natural Religion' is a term opposed to 'Revealed Religion'.

**The Khasia Hills:** In Assam.

**General Nicholson:** During the Indian Mutiny, he led, as brigadier-general, on September 14, 1857, the storming party at the siege of Delhi and fell mortally wounded.

**Captain Pole:** An English officer who fell at the taking of Travancore lines in 1809 A.D. and was buried in a sandy waste 25 miles from the scene of battle. A few years after the Shanars of the neighbourhood commenced the worship of his spirit by offering spirituous liquors.

**Hurdeo Lala** (or Haradul Lala): A chief of Bundelkhand whose spirit, according to the natives of Northern India, visited the camp of Lord Hastings with cholera in consequence of the slaughter of cows in the groves where the chief's ashes were interred. 'Haradaur' or 'Haradul' is the name given to the earth mounds on which a flag is raised to avert epidemic disease from the villages of Northern India.

**Tertullian** (160-??? A.D.): A great Latin theologian. "He had the heart of a Christian with the intellect of an advocate".

*Augustine*: Augustinus, Aurelius St., the greatest of the Latin fathers. His "Confessions" is a sacred autobiography of one of the greatest intellects the world has ever seen. The passage quoted is from his "De Civitate Dei", a profound and masterly vindication of the Christian Church, conceived of as a new order rising on the ruins of the old Roman Empire.

*Mors Janua Vitae*: 'Death is the gate of life.'

*Which in fact is the world*: Strictly this statement is not true. No form of Hinduism accepts this position in its metaphysic. Either the supreme is the only Real, the world being just Appearance; or the Supreme pervades it without being identical with it.

*Meriah sacrifices among the Khonds*: 'Meriah' is the name given to the victims of sacrifice in the Khond tracts near Orissa, where young persons were sacrificed in order to propitiate the divinity supposed to preside over the soil. The Khonds inhabit an immense tract of mountainous country, covered with dense jungle.

*Jephtha's (sacrifice)*: "When Jephtha went forth against the Ammonites, he vowed that if he returned victorious he would sacrifice, as a burnt offering, whatever first met him on his entrance into his native city. He gained a splendid victory, and at the news thereof his only daughter came forth dancing to give him welcome. The miserable father rent his clothes in agony, but the noble-spirited maiden would not hear of his violating the vow. She demanded a short respite, to bewail upon the mountains her blighted hope of becoming a mother, and then submitted to her fate". (Brewer).

*Grimm*: Jacob Ludwig Karl (1785-1863). A great German philologist and mythologist.

*Ere human statute purged the gentle weal*: "Macbeth" Act III, Sc. iv.

*A Socratic dialogue*: Euthyphro.

*Hobbes*, Thomas (1588-1679): English philosopher and political theorist. Author of "Leviathan".

*Pantheism is the philosophy of Natural Religion*: See note ante.

*Identical with it*: See note ante.

*Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting*: From Wordsworth's "Ode on the Intimations of Immortality".

*The sleeping and the dead*: "Macbeth" Act II, Sc. ii.

**4.—GAUTAMA THE BUDDHA**  
**ANNUAL LECTURE ON A MASTER MIND**

*Henriette Hertz Trust*

*Read on 29th June 1938*

SIR SARVEPALLI RADHAKRISHNAN, Fellow of the British Academy 1939, M. A. (Madras 1909, Oxford 1936); D. LITT. (Hon.) 1928; LITT. D. (Hon.) 1937; LL. D. (Hon.) 1938. Born on 5th Sept., 1888. Professor Radhakrishnan was Assistant Professor of Philosophy, Presidency College, Madras, 1911-16; Professor of Philosophy, Presidency College, 1916-17; University Professor of Philosophy, Mysore, 1918-21; George V Professor of Philosophy, Calcutta University, 1921-31; Vice-Chancellor, Andhra University, Waltair, 1931-36. Upton Lecturer, Manchester College, Oxford, 1926, and 1929-30; Haskell Lecturer in Comparative Religion, University of Chicago, 1926; Hibbert Lecturer, 1929; Member of the International Committee on Intellectual Co-operation of the League of Nations, 1931-39. Since 1936 he has been Spalding Professor of Eastern Religion and Ethics, Oxford University. He is now Vice-Chancellor, Benares Hindu University.

As an interpreter of the Philosophy and Religion of India to the West, Professor Radhakrishnan stands foremost among the great sons of India. To his vast erudition Radhakrishnan unites real eloquence. With consummate ease and mastery, in brilliant style and with a rapid rush of forensic utterance, Radhakrishnan discourses on the profoundest problems of life to enraptured audiences. C. E. M. Joad, who has written a whole book on Radhakrishnan's philosophy, writes of his "beautifully modulated voice conveying in a series of exquisitely turned phrases an equal mastery of the intricacies of the English language and of Hindu Metaphysics". Sir Francis Younghusband, writing in the Autumn number of "The Times Literary Supplement (1940)" says: "When he delivered his lecture on Buddha in the 'Master Mind' series to the British Academy it was observed of him that he was himself a master mind. Before an audience of the leading men of letters and philosophers in this country he was able, without a single hesitation, to deliver a discourse which enthralled the meeting and brought not only Buddhism but Hinduism right home to us in England".

*Sutta Nipata*: 'A collection of suttas'. A 'sutta' (or 'sutra') means a 'thread', and is the name for a literary form in Buddhist scriptures in which the words of the Buddha are strung together as a sermon or dialogue.

*Asita*: "On the day of the Bodhisatta's birth a sage named Asita 'the black', dwelling in the Himalayas beholds the gods of the heaven of the Thirty-three sporting in the sky, and inquires of them the reason of their delight. They tell him that the Bodhisatta has been born in the world of men in a village of the Sakhyas in the Lumbini Country, and that he will turn the wheel of doctrine in the park Isipattana (the deer-park at Benares). Asita goes to the dwelling of Suddhodana and asks to see the boy". ("The Life of Buddha" by E. J. Thomas.)

*Simeon*: A devout Jew, inspired by the Holy Ghost, who met the parents of Lord Jesus in the Temple, took him in his arms, and gave thanks for what he saw, and knew of Jesus. (Luke ii 25-35.)

*Mara*: "Mara, the wicked one, followed close behind the Bodhisattva, as he was practising austerities for six years, seeking and pursuing an entrance, and at no time succeeding in finding any".

*The demon of Socrates*: From early youth upwards it frequently happened to Socrates, both on important and trivial occasions, that he was restrained from what he was on the point of doing by "a voice" (or as he called it sometimes "the accustomed sign"). He attributed it to a benevolent god or spirit. It came to him unsolicited and his belief in it was serious and sincere.

*The Tevijja Sutta*: or 'The Sutta of the three-fold knowledge.'

*Brahmavihara*: In Buddhist literature "brahma" is used in compounds without any reference to the god, but in the sense of 'excellent, perfect'.

*Nirvana*: "Nirvana" (Pali: "Nibbana") means 'blowing out, extinction' and denotes the extinction of craving, of the desire for existence in all its forms, and the consequent cessation of pain. Rhys Davids insists that Nirvana means the extinction of craving in this life, and not the extinction of the individual.

From lust and from desire detached,  
The monk with insight here and now  
Has gone to the immortal peace,  
The unchangeable Nirvana-state.

*Eight-fold path*: Right views, right intention, right speech,

right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration.

*Tathagata*: Lit. One who goes in like manner. An appellation of Gautama implying that he came in the same way as the previous Buddhas.

*Mahaparinibbana Sutta*: 'The Great Sutta of The Full Release', in which the last days of the Buddha are described.

*Dhammapada*: A beautiful and rich collection of proverbs.

*Udana*: and *Itivuttaka*: These consist of prose and verse and contain a collection of sayings of The Buddha.

*Mahanidana Sutta*: On the chain of causation and theories of the soul.

*The discourse to the Brahmin*: "Kutadanta sutta", a dialogue with the Brahmin Kutadanta against animal sacrifice.

*Jataka*: Verses belonging to tales of previous existences of the Buddha.

*St. Thomas Aquinas* (1225-74): Of Aquina in Sicily, called the "Father of Moral Philosophy". He represents in his writings and notably in his "Summa Totius Philosophiae", the culmination of scholastic philosophy, the harmony of faith and reason.

*Robert Bridges* (1844-1930): A great scholar and poet. He wrote beautiful lyrics and was a remarkable metrist. In 1913 he was made poet laureate. "The Testament of Beauty" his great philosophical poem, is valued as "a compendium of the wisdom, learning, and experience of an artistic spirit".

#### • 5.—THE MESSAGE OF THE FOREST

RABINDRANATH TAGORE was born in Calcutta on May 6, 1861, the youngest son of Maharishi Devendranath and grandson of Prince Dwarakanath Tagore. After a private education, he was sent to England to study law, but soon he returned to India. While still young he began writing for Bengali periodicals. In 1901 he established the famous "Shantiniketan" which developed into an important educational institution conducted in unconventional lines. In 1913 Tagore was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature, and he utilized the amount of the prize, £8,000, for the upkeep of his school. The poet has shed a lustre on modern India by his unique greatness as 'the representative man of his time, in touch with the fulness of his intellectual heritage'. Sir Francis Younghusband observes of him: "Tagore

is the outstanding poetic figure not only in India but in the world at the present time". By his numerous writings, which are permeated by a sense of the beauty of the Universe and a consciousness of God, Tagore has done much to interpret to the West the spiritual ideas of the East. He insists, however, upon the unity of civilisation and holds that the East and the West need each other. E. J. Thompson, his biographer, notes appreciatively the fact that Tagore does not praise India and the East at the expense of the West. "Rabindranath has repeatedly insisted that even the West's conquest of material forces has been essentially a spiritual achievement, however perverted to brutal ends, and that his countrymen will impoverish themselves if they neglect it".

"The Message of the Forest" is an essay in *Creative Unity*, one of the wisest of the poet's books.

*Ishavasyam idam sarvam, etc.*: "Ishavasyopanishad".

*Yadidam Kincha Sarvam, etc.*: "Katha Upanishad".

*Shakuntala*: In this famous ancient Sanskrit drama by Kalidasa, Shakuntala, the daughter of the rishi Visvamitra by Menaka, was brought up by the sage Kanva in a forest hermitage, south of Hastinapura.

*Kadambari*: A prose novel written by Vanabhatta (or Banabhatta) in the 7th Century. Tagore calls him a poet because he wrote prose-poetry.

*Mrit-shakatika*: Or the Toy Cart, by King Sudraka, supposed to have been written in the 1st or 2nd Century A.D.

*Uttara-Rama-Charita*: A drama by Bhava Bhuti, descriptive of the latter part of the life of Rama. The drama is based upon the Uttara Kanda of "The Ramayana" and was probably written about the beginning of the 8th Century.

*Shakespeare's youthful poems*: "Venus and Adonis" and "Lucrece".

*Ritusamhara*: An erotic poem, descriptive of the seasons.

*Kumara-sambhava*: A poem on the birth of the war god, "a charming fanciful tale, in which the gloomy, awful Siva is won to love and happiness by the bright daughter of the snow-crowned Himalayas". (Uma).

*Kings of Raghu's line*: In "Raghavamsa", an epic poem which celebrates the Solar line of Raghu, King of Ayodhya, but more particularly the ancestry and the life of his descendant Rama.

*Dilipa*: Father to Raghu.

*Malavikagnimitra*: This differs from Kalidasa's other dramas in having for its hero and heroine human characters. Agnimitra, son of Pushyamitra of the Sunga dynasty, is a historical character.

*Hath not old custom, etc.*: "As You Like It", Act II, Sc. i. In the forest of Arden the Duke Senior is addressing his 'co-mates and brothers in exile'.

*Bird, beast, insect or worm*: "Paradise Lost", Book IV, 704-5.

*Vashishtha and Visvamitra*: Visvamitra, a great king coveted the wondrous cow of plenty in the possession of Vashishtha, the Brahma-rishi and tried to take her away by force. A great battle followed between the hosts of Visvamitra and the warriors produced by the cow to support her master. Utterly defeated Visvamitra retired to the Himalayas to work out by penance his own elevation to the Brahmanical rank so as to be upon an equality with his rival. He accomplished his object and became a priest and Vashishtha suffered from his power. Eventually they were reconciled. "Vashishtha being propitiated by the gods became reconciled to Visvamitra, and recognised his claim to all the prerogatives of a Brahma Rishi and Visvamitra paid all honour to Vashishtha".

## 6.—INDIAN WOMEN POETS

MACNICOL, Rev. Nicol, M. A., D. LITT., D. D., is a retired Missionary of the Church of Scotland. He was working as a missionary for several years at Bombay and Poona. He travelled throughout India as a member of the Commission on Christian Higher Education in India. Well read in Indian philosophy and literature and gifted with a sympathetic insight into Indian life, Macnicol writes highly readable essays on Indian Culture. He is the author of several books on India, the best known of them being *Indian Theism from the Vedic to the Muhammadan Period*, *The Making of Modern India*, and *Pandita Ramabai*. "Indian Women Poets" is one of the essays in *The Making of Modern India*.

*Gargi*: Like Maitreyi and Pratitheyi, a learned woman mentioned in the Grihya Sutras of the Rig Veda.

*Yajnavalkya*: A celebrated sage, to whom is attributed "the White Yajur-veda", "The Satapatha Brahmana", "the Brihad Aranyaka", and the code of law called "Yajnavalkya-smriti". He is considered as having been "the originator of the Yoga

doctrine, and to have helped in preparing the world for the preaching of Buddha. He had two wives, Maitreyi and Katyayani, and he instructed the former in his philosophical doctrine. Max Muller quotes a dialogue between them from the "Satapatha Brahmana" (*Ancient Sanskrit Literature* p. 22) in which the sage sets forth his views.

*Saint Teresa:* (1515-82) A Spanish saint and author, who was born at Avila in 1515, entered the Carmelite order in 1534, established a reformed order in 1562, became famous for her ascetic life and mystic visions later, and died in 1582. She left behind her some notable religious writings, afterwards published, including "The Way of Perfection" and "The Castle of the Soul". She was canonised by Pope Gregory XV.

*Ahilyabai:* A Mahratta princess of the Holkar family, who ruled in the middle of the 18th Century. She had a quick and clear understanding, strong natural sense, a lofty mind, and noble virtues. She was munificent; she built the Visvesvara temple at Benares, and the present Indore.

*Pandita Ramabai:* In an essay entitled "Some Notable Indian Christians" Nicol Macnicol describes Pandita Ramabai as the greatest Indian Christian of this generation'. He writes of her: "She has not been denationalised by any influence from the West. Her desires are set upon other things; her citizenship is in heaven. She is, I think we may say, Indian in every fibre of her being, and none the less so because racial or national or personal claims mean nothing at all to her beside the claims of God and of the things of the spirit".

*Very old are we men, etc.:* From Walter De La Mare's "All That's Past".

*Sappho:* (Flourished 611-592 B.C.) The famous lyric poetess of ancient Greece.

*Jnaneswar, Mukta Bai:* Jnaneswar was a great religious poet in Marathi. He lived in the 13th Century A.D. His sister Mukta Bai also wrote philosophical poems.

*Namdev:* A great Maratha 'Bhakta' and poet. In his verse the influence of Islam first appears in the Marathi. He is said to have lived in the 15th Century A.D.

*Vithoba:* Or Vithal, a deified sage, who is largely worshipped in the Western parts of the Dekhan and the South Mahratta country. He is the popular deity in the temple at Pandarpur, on the left bank of the Kistna river. He has been celebrated by Tukaram and other Mahratta poets.

*The desire of the moth, etc.*: Famous lines of Shelley.

*Mira Bai*: A daughter of the Rahtor of Maitra, and wife of the Rana of Udaipur. She was celebrated for her beauty and her romantic piety. She was a poetess, and some of her odes and hymns to Krishna are yet admired. Her poems and odes constitute the ritual of the theistic sects, especially those of Kabir and Nanak.

*Rajasthan*: *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan*.

*Sir Henry Cunningham*: Advocate-General in Madras, 1872-77. Judge of the Calcutta High Court, 1877-87.

*Mrs. Sarojini Naidu*: Sarojini Naidu's poems have won high praise from great English critics.

("The Song of the Princess of Zeb-un-nissa" is in *Golden Threshold*.)

*Toru Dutt*: 1856-78. As a poetess she rose early to fame but died tragically young. Edmund Gosse says of her: "When the history of our country comes to be written, there is sure to be a page in it dedicated to this fragile exotic blossom of song". In an essay on Toru Dutt (1882) Edmund Gosse describes 'the surprise and rapture' he experienced when he opened 'a hopeless volume, with its queer type, published in Bhowanipore'.

*Sleepless soul*: "I thought of Chatterton, the marvellous boy, the sleepless soul that perished in his pride". (Wordsworth). Chatterton killed himself at eighteen, and put an end to a promising poetic career.

### 7.—RAJA RAM MOHAN ROY

HON. MR. JUSTICE RANADE. Mahadeo Govind Ranade (1842-1901). Justice Ranade has been called a modern rishi. Next to Ram Mohan Roy, he is perhaps the greatest figure of modern India. His patriotism was of the loftiest character and he believed in the possibilities of a synthetic nationalism that will unite the varied peoples of India. Steeped in our ancient lore, he dwelt easily amongst the ideas and personages of the past. But his thoughts were always with the present and the future. "His one aspiration through life was that India should be roused from the lethargy of centuries, so that she might become a great and living nation, responsive to truth and justice, and self-respect, responsive to all the claims of our higher nature, animated by lofty ideals, and undertaking great national tasks". (Gokhale.)





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• Ranade is the master of a sublime style that answers to the sublimity of his thought.

*Bhadrapada*: A Hindu month when the sun is in the sign Simham, corresponding, more or less, to the Tamil month of Auvani.

*Samaja*: The Brahma Samaja.

*Narada*: A sage who in Hindu mythology is spoken of as engaged in conveying messages and causing discord among the gods and men.

*Prahлада*: A devotee of Vishnu, saved from the cruelty of Hiranya by Vishnu in his incarnation as Narasimha.

*Vasudewa*: Belonged to the Yadava branch of the Lunar race. He was father of Krishna and brother of Kunti.

*Janaka*: King of Vaideha and father of Sita. He refused to acknowledge the hierarchical pretensions of the Brahmins, and claimed the right of performing sacrifices independent of priests. The sages, however, honoured him with their visit.

*Founder of the Swami Narayana Sect*: An earnest religious reformer of the last century. He preached Krishna as the sole deity, inculcated purity of life and abstinence from violence.

*Keshava Chandra Sen*: A Brahmo leader, who later replaced simple Theism by mystical doctrines of his New Dispensation. One of the greatest figures of the last century.

*A Greek philosopher*: Socrates.

*Luther*: Martin (1483-1546). A great German religious reformer, who protested against the abuses of the Church and started the Reformation.

*Erasmus*: (1466-1536). Dutch scholar, one of the greatest humanists. He sympathised with Luther and the Reformation.

*Melanchthon*: (1497-1560). A German scholar and reformer.

*Sakta sect*: The Hindu worshippers of the Sakti, the power or energy of the divine nature in action as impersonated in the female deities—Lakshmi, Parvati and Saraswati.

*250 millions*: Now about 400 millions.

### 8.—THE CULTURAL INFLUENCES OF ISLAM

**SIR ABDUL QADIR** (Khan Bahadur Sheik), Kt. Born 1874 in Punjab. Started life as editor and journalist; after study for the Bar in England, practised as an Advocate, became Additional Judge, High Court of Judicature, Lahore. He became the first

elected President of the Punjab Legislative Council; acted as Minister for Education, Punjab; was deputed as a full delegate to represent India at the 7th Assembly of the League of Nations at Geneva in 1926; was Revenue Member of the Executive Council, Punjab Government, 1927; Member, Council of the Secretary of State for India, 1934-37. Adviser since 1937.

Sir Abdul Qadir is well-known for his scholarship and culture. As an interpreter of Muslim literature and culture, he stands high among modern Indians.

*Put his foot, etc.:* Quoted from Babur's Memoirs.

*Kayasthas:* A sect of Hindus, generally worshippers of Siva; 'perhaps the most clearly demarcated of existing castes'. Their habitual language of correspondence was till recently the Persian.

*Dayananda Sarasvati:* (1827-83). The founder and leader of the sect of the Arya Samaj; a reformer, opposed to post-vedic abuses in Hindu religious and social practices.

*Nanak:* Began to teach about 1490 A.D. and called upon men to worship 'the one invisible God'. He collected together a large body of followers whom he called Sikhs or disciples.

*Kabir:* (1500 A.D.) The most celebrated of the disciples of Ramananda. He assailed the system of idolatrous worship. He was equally revered by Hindus and Mussalmans.

*Ramananda:* A religious reformer of the Vaishnava sect, who lived about the end of the 14th or beginning of the 15th Century A.D. He admitted low caste men as his disciples.

*Dadu:* Born 1600 A.D. A cotton-cleaner who turned religious reformer and follower of Ramananda.

*Ramdas:* The famous religious preceptor of Sivaji.

*Chaitanya:* Born 1485 A.D. A Hindu religious reformer, who abolished all caste-distinctions amongst his followers. Chaitanya preached Bhakti or incessant devotion, and his doctrine was essentially the worship of Krishna as an avatar of Vishnu.

*Raja Ram Mohan Roy:* (1772-1833). Called 'The Father of Modern India'. As a social reformer he preached against Sati, Polygamy and Kulinism, and advocated the remarriage of widows. He advocated the abolition of idolatry and founded the Brahmo Samaj in 1828.

*Sir Thomas Arnold:* Was Professor at Aligarh and Lahore and later at University College London

## 9.—DEMOCRACY THROUGH INDIAN EYES

SASTRI. Rt. Hon. V. S. Srinivasa Sastri, P.C. (1921); C.H. (1930); LL.D. Born 22nd September, 1869. He was teacher at various institutions till he became Head Master of the Hindu High School, Triplicane. In 1907 he became Gokhale's disciple and joined the Servants of India Society, of which he became president; was a distinguished member of the Madras Legislative Council and of the Supreme Legislative Council; served on several important Committees and deputations. Mr. Sastri represented India at the Imperial Conference (1921), at the League of Nations Assembly (1921) and at the Conference on the Limitation of Armaments, Washington (1921). He was deputed in 1922 by the Government of India to visit Australia, New Zealand and Canada and to urge on the Governments of these Dominions the removal of the disabilities of Indians lawfully domiciled there. As Agent-General of the Government of India to South Africa (1927-28) Mr. Sastri did great work. He attended the Indian Round Table Conferences of 1930 and 1931. He was Vice-Chancellor, Annamalai University, during 1935-40.

Mr. Sastri is greatly respected alike for his learning and character. As a master of the music of words he is admired all over the world where English is spoken. Lord Balfour placed Mr. Sastri among the first five of the world's orators of our century. Sir Thomas Smart has dubbed him for ever "the Empire's silver-tongued orator". Mr. A. L. Smith, Master of Balliol, as president of a meeting at Oxford which Mr. Sastri addressed, made the astonishing statement that he never realised the beauty of the English language till he heard Mr. Sastri. Lady Lytton called him simply but felicitously "an artist in words". J. H. Hofmeyr speaks of Mr. Sastri "as one of the greatest orators of modern times—an orator, moreover, whose greatness is derived not merely from technical skill and mastery, and from a superb command of language, but also from the freshness, the range, the vigour and depth of his thought. Not often does one find a speaker who at once has something to say, which is so well worth saying, and is able to say it with such distinction and charm".

J. H. Huxley: (1825-95). One of the foremost scientists of the 19th century.

Cavour: (1810-61). Italian politician. He opposed the republican zeal of Mazzini and the military ardour of Garibaldi, as likely to hinder rather than aid the desired union of Italy.



